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**Beyond
the
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Ideology and Political Action in

the Belgian Ecology Parties

Herbert Kitschelt and Staf Hellemans

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Preface

Understanding the changing organization and ideology of the European left requires a close analysis of the emerging ecology and left-socialist parties that have established themselves since the 1960s. In this study we present results of the first detailed empirical investigation of ecology parties based on a comprehensive survey in which more than 10 percent of all members in the Belgian parties Agalev and Ecolo participated. At first glance Belgium may not seem to be an especially important country in the overall European context. Yet many features of the Belgian ecologists and their parties are typical of ecology parties elsewhere. In this sense our study provides a survey of the changing European left in a much broader setting. Moreover, it attempts to contribute to recent efforts to breathe new life into the theoretical analysis of political parties in general.

Our research project grew out of common discussions about the future of the European left over a number of years. It is difficult to carry out cooperative research if the principal investigators live and work on different continents, but in the spring of 1985 we seized the opportunity to undertake this research project on the Belgian ecology parties Agalev and Ecolo. The design of the questionnaire was a joint undertaking. With the aid of Agalev's and Ecolo's national party bureaus, Staf Hellemans pretested and circulated the questionnaire among participants in the parties' national preelection conferences in the summer of 1985. Hellemans also supervised coding of the data in a seminar on empirical research methods at the University of Leuven and began the data analysis. Both of us made considerable headway on the data analysis during a joint research period at Duke University. Further statistical investigations exploring the empirical validity of the theoretical framework proposed in this book were performed by Herbert Kitschelt. After a period of intensive discussions between us and after submitting a preliminary version of our study to the criticism of colleagues and party activists, the final manuscript was prepared by Kitschelt.

Above all we would like to thank the activists in Agalev and Ecolo for their willingness to participate in this investigation and to assist us with distributing and collecting the questionnaires. In particular we are grateful to the secretariats of both parties and to Rudi and Michele Winzen without whom it would have been impossible to conduct the survey. Our gratitude also extends to the sociology students at the University of Leuven who helped with the coding of the data.

Our cooperation was greatly facilitated by a fellowship Herbert Kitschelt received from the German Marshall Fund in 1985. The University of Leuven supported us by funding the printing expenses of the questionnaires. Further, we would like to thank the Duke University Research Council and the Trent Foundation for enabling us to spend time together at Duke in the fall of 1987 to work on the statistical data analysis. Moreover, the data analysis could not have been realized without the competent and efficient research assistance of Nancy Woodbury-Ronan and Cynthia Irvin. Finally, we are indebted to our colleagues for their advice and criticism, especially to Professors David Canon, Karel Dobelaere, Peter Lange, and George Tsebelis. Of course, we alone bear responsibility for the findings and conclusions of this study.

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Introduction

Since the 1970s and 1980s many moderate European left parties have experienced a deep crisis. In the short term this crisis of social democracy has been manifested in a loss of government office, reduced influence on public policy, and a marked decline of electoral support. In the longer term crisis indicators have been a weakening capacity of socialist and social democratic parties to attract activists and to mobilize broad participation in the party organization and a profound uncertainty about the ideological principles of leftist societal reform. Big government programs to expand social services and stabilize economic growth are clearly no longer the answer to many pressing political issues that generate public unrest and demand for political change in the 1980s and beyond. At the same time the mass party organization, tied into a protective belt of closely knit interest associations and collec-

tivities (unions, cooperatives, health and welfare organizations), has ceased to provide a viable answer to the question of how left parties can create lasting social coalitions around a program for social transformation.

In part as a consequence, in part as a cause, of the European social democracies' relative decline, in a considerable number of West European democracies a new cohort of parties, running under New Left or ecologist labels, has begun to upset the electoral balance between established moderate right and left political parties since the late 1960s. In most instances these new parties have gained support at the expense of the traditional left, but sometimes they have also taken away voters from centrist liberal or Christian parties. Recent elections illustrate the arrival of the new parties. In Denmark the Socialist People's party, a creation of the late 1950s, which turned to a libertarian and socialist program in the aftermath of the 1960s student movement, received over 14 percent of the vote in the 1987 parliamentary election and represents almost half as many votes as the once hegemonic Danish social democrats. In Switzerland elections in 1987 boosted the fortunes of Green and New Left parties, while the social democrats suffered their worst losses since World War II. In West Germany the Greens won over 8 percent of the vote in the January 1987 federal election, thus firmly establishing themselves as a fourth force in a party system that had not witnessed the sustained growth of a new party since 1953. Greens and social democrats together now receive about the same support as the Social Democratic party did on its own in the 1970s. Similarly, in Belgium ecology parties in Flanders and Wallonia made their parliamentary debut in 1981 and increased their national electoral support from 4.8 percent in that year to 6.1 percent in 1985 and to 7.1 percent in 1987.

The new ecology and left parties have tried to change the parliamentary policy debates and place issues on the agenda that are closely identified with contemporary social protest movements, such as environmental, feminist, and peace movements. Yet these new parties do not become important electoral forces in all democracies where new social movements have appeared, but only where a conjunction of socioeconomic affluence and political institutions creates opportunities for movement activists to build effective political parties. These parties typically emerge in corporatist welfare states with long-term socialist government incumbency during the 1960s and 1970s. Government participation rendered conventional leftist parties inaccessible to the demands of the new social movements. At the same time, the centralized, concerted policymaking process in corporatist democracies blocked off

other avenues of social movement participation in political decisions. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and West Germany are countries where favorable circumstances have furthered the appearance of the new cohort of parties (cf. Kitschelt 1988a). In contrast, these parties are weaker or nonexistent in Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

The emerging cohort of ecology and New Left parties expresses a unique blend of ideas that embody continuity as well as discontinuity with the conventional left parties. The new parties endorse the egalitarian and redistributive ideological objectives of the established European left but reject a socialist centralization of economic or political power in formal bureaucratic organizations of state planning, be they public corporations, government planning boards, interest associations or, for that matter, political parties. In this sense they express a definitely *libertarian* thrust that values spontaneous solidarity, individual voluntarism, and free association and opposes coercive, centralized agencies of social control. We will therefore refer to ecology and New Left parties as *left-libertarian* parties. Left-libertarians call for broader political participation, societal decentralization, and less growth of big bureaucracies in business and state.

Antigrowth positions, support of environmental protection, the high valuation of civil liberties and communal self-governance are not disjointed “single issues” that have come together in left-libertarian party programs by chance but constitute essentials of a broader political philosophy for which resource scarcities, ecological damages, the risks of new technologies, and the administrative encroachment on personal autonomy symbolize the need for transforming basic institutions and patterns of development in contemporary industrial society. On the one hand, left-libertarians struggle against the subjection of *outer nature* under imperatives of technological and administrative control. On the other, they are concerned with the treatment of the *inner, human nature* in advanced industrial societies. These struggles concern the protection of individual civil rights and collective group autonomy against the authority of professional experts and anonymous “people-processing” organizations. In the delivery of social services, for instance, left-libertarians wish to limit or even displace markets and bureaucracies by informal solidary groups engaging in networks of mutual aid.

A close examination of the beliefs and orientations of ecology party militants which we will undertake in this book demonstrates the unique position of left-libertarian politics in the contemporary political dis-

course. The new parties are not simply a “part” of the conventional left, because they raise distinctly new questions about the nature of desirable social organization not captured by traditional socialist ideology. At the same time, it would be wrong to claim that they cannot be located at all within the traditional universe of political discourse and therefore are “neither” right nor left. In reality left-libertarians *transform* the meaning of right and left and, in this sense, go “beyond” the conventional left, although they remain in its legacy. They blend new ideas into a commitment to equality and emancipation that has characterized all leftist challenges of the established social institutions. Left-libertarians have learned from the unintended and unwanted consequences of past leftist social reform and, in the light of these experiences, try to sketch a new vision of institutional change.

The libertarian thrust of the new movements and parties is aimed at the “business of politics” itself: their supporters demand that hierarchical, centralized power structures should be dismantled and replaced by decentralized, participatory institutions not only in civil society, but in the political sphere as well. In most European parliamentary democracies one logical starting point for reform is the organization and internal decisionmaking of political parties. At first, left-libertarians tried to open up decision procedures within established parties, primarily the main socialist and social democratic parties. When they failed to make satisfactory headway, they attempted to design their own parties in ways that demonstrate the practical feasibility of the participatory idea. They reason that if society at large cannot be reshaped according to the left-libertarian vision right now, at least left-libertarian parties can demonstrate, through their own internal procedures of democratic decisionmaking, that an alternative to elite democracy under the tutelage of bureaucratic organizations is possible.

In this sense European left-libertarians are probably the most consistent advocates of what American political scientists have defined as an “amateur outlook” on political life (cf. Wilson 1962; Hofstetter 1971). Amateurs are committed to participatory decision modes, something Hofstetter (1971) calls the “procedural” dimension of amateurism.¹ Moreover, amateur militants value their party’s pure policy goals more than its electoral success and take strategic stances on political questions that rule out compromise with other political actors. According to Hofstetter, this is the “issue” dimension of amateurism. European left-libertarians are amateurs at least in the procedural sense and often also in matters of party strategy.

Political amateurism works against the “professionalization” of polit-

ical life in conventional European political parties which is now far advanced, especially in the more corporatist parliamentary democracies with proportional representation. The left-libertarian call for the open democratic participation of ordinary citizens in political parties goes against the grain of a political style which relies heavily on peak-level negotiations among the elites of organized interest groups and hierarchical mass parties with considerable control over patronage and policy. Neocorporatist and consociational decisionmaking procedures put a premium on political stability, moderation, compromise, and incrementalism; all this, however, is inimical to participation and social innovation which constitute the major concern of left-libertarians.

In our study we will employ the example of successful ecology parties in one organized, corporatist European democracy, Belgium, to explore the transformation of the left and the emergence of a new left-libertarian ideology and political practice. We are guided by the hypothesis that the programs presented by political parties as well as the organization and strategies they have chosen do not reflect only the skilled rational exploitation of electoral opportunities and competitive positions by party leaders inspired by a longing for government office and political power. Indeed, party politics is also based on the political biographies and experiences of party activists, a set of coherent ideas shared and debated within a party, and an organizational practice that is related to these ideas and activists.²

In order to understand the internal dynamic of left-libertarian parties, we will sketch a broader theoretical framework for the study of intra-party group formation and strategic choice which is, in principle, applicable to a wide range of political parties. Our framework draws on both behavioral and rational choice reconstructions of internal party politics but argues that each, taken by itself, is unsatisfactory to understand internal party dynamics. While behavioral studies generate a "thick description" of parties without theory, public choice approaches provide "thin theorems" with little empirical content. We have therefore sought to develop an intermediate, synthesizing approach which preserves a concern with theory but adds a healthy dosage of empirical realism from the behavioral tradition. In particular we want to show that both the ideas that are common to all activists in a party as well as those that internally divide them impinge upon the dynamic of party development. At the interface between parties and the external society at large, the relative size and coalition behavior of party groups can be linked to individual political biographies and the environment of political mobilization in which parties operate. In an internal analysis of party behavior the group

structure of parties helps to explain the parties' internal organization and choice of strategy.

Although early political scientists such as Michels or Weber took parties very seriously, the study of parties has remained an undertheorized area of research. After a wave of behavioral, highly inductive, and descriptive studies on party activists in the 1950s and 1960s, political scientists more or less abandoned the study of parties in the 1970s and early 1980s in favor of research on interest groups and public policy. Party organization and strategy were regarded primarily as a function of opportunities to win votes and office. This reductionist image of parties, however, falls short of explaining many aspects of party dynamics, for instance, why some parties choose strategies that clearly do not maximize electoral support and why new parties can displace established competitors. Maybe it is now time to take a fresh look at political parties and contribute to a more complex view of parties as multidimensional ensembles of forces that include the social coalition of external supporters, the political ideas of party militants, organizational constraints, and the strategic imperatives of party competition.³

A study of left-libertarian party politics is especially likely to highlight the importance of ideas and party activists, given that ecology and New Left parties are fairly recent arrivals on the contemporary political scene and are built on social movements that set themselves sharply apart from established forms of political organization. Although left-libertarian parties have already made a significant electoral impact in a number of European democracies, we know little about their activists, their roots in social movements, and their internal dynamics of organization building and ideological discourse. Based on the example of the Belgian ecology parties *Agalev* and *Ecolo*, the present study makes a step toward exploring these issues empirically. We will seek detailed answers to the following questions:

- Who joins left-libertarian parties? What are social and political background experiences that make individuals likely to join such parties?
- What policies and electoral strategies do left-libertarian party activists support? What are the internal divisions and debates that characterize left-libertarian politics? Where do activists situate themselves on the left-right spectrum, and what ideological meaning do these self-placements have?
- How do activists participate in intraparty politics? How do they influence policy decisions? How successful are these parties in

decentralizing their own power structures? Are left-libertarian parties able to break Michels' (1911/62) "iron law of oligarchy" or do they fall prey to a dynamic of power centralization in a small elite? —How do left-libertarian parties deal with the issue of political leadership? How well do party leaders represent, both in terms of their social and political background as well as their ideology, the rank and file?

For at least three reasons we have chosen the Belgian ecology parties Agalev and Ecolo to address these questions empirically. First, activists in Agalev and Ecolo welcomed our request to circulate a survey questionnaire among party militants, a permission that is not easy to get, given the wide range of often politically sensitive questions our study addresses.⁴ Second, Agalev and Ecolo represent typical cases of left-libertarian party formation and have risen in an institutional setting—parliamentary democracy with comprehensive welfare states, centralized political interest intermediation, and considerable left party participation in governments—that is similar to those of other countries with left-libertarian parties. In this sense the Belgian left-libertarian parties should help us understand comparable political developments elsewhere. Third, since Agalev and Ecolo operate in different regions of Belgium, have different organizational roots, and mobilize in different political environments of left-libertarian politics, we can compare their militants and organizational structures in order to shed light on the following questions: What is common to left-libertarian parties, and what is unique in individual cases? Is there a logic according to which we can explain variations in the internal dynamic of left-libertarian parties? Although these questions eventually need to be answered by drawing on a wider sample of cases, the subnational comparison of the Belgian parties provides at least a beginning for a more rigorous empirical comparison of left-libertarian politics in Western democracies.

Our work on the Belgian left-libertarians is complementary to and relies on a previous study by one of the authors (Kitschelt 1988b and 1989) which compares the origins and dynamics of the West German Greens and the Belgian Agalev and Ecolo. That study, however, employed a different research design, techniques of data collection, and methodology of analysis than our present work. The previous study drew on over 130 elite interviews of municipal councillors, party executives, and parliamentarians in all three parties. It worked with an open and semistructured questionnaire yielding qualitative interpretations and comparisons rather than quantitative estimates. Our present study, in

contrast, is based on a structured questionnaire (see Appendix II) distributed to all participants of the Agalev and Ecolo national party conferences before the 1985 Belgian parliamentary elections and providing 256 completed questionnaires usable for statistical data analysis. To our knowledge this Belgian data set is the only available comparatively large survey of ecology party militants anywhere to date. For this reason these data are especially important to test generalizations about the nature of ecology parties and the entire cohort of left-libertarian parties.

Although our present study is guided by the same theoretical framework developed in Kitschelt (1989a: chapter 2) and summarized here in chapter 1, the different methodologies employed in the two studies lend themselves to the exploration of different but complementary questions. Since mass surveys tend to be more representative than small samples of party elites, our present study is much better equipped to explore the militants' typical political career paths, ideological predilections, and individual patterns of party activism. Especially important questions concerning the ideas and beliefs of left-libertarian activists can be addressed with the mass survey, whereas elite interviews permit only tenuous generalizations. Similarly, the mass survey provides interesting opportunities to examine power relations in parties, for example, by investigating patterns of participation in party decisionmaking or the power reputation of different party organs. Finally, the survey is designed to track down political career mobility inside parties and isolate the qualifications and biases that facilitate recruitment to leadership positions.

Questionnaire techniques, however, also suffer from definite limitations. They are usually not very powerful in tapping less tangible dimensions of individual and organizational processes, such as the incentives and disincentives to join and to keep contributing to a party, the distribution of power and influence at party conferences, the interaction among party leaders and their internal and external clienteles, and the political weight of individuals and party organs in a party's actual decisionmaking process. To explore these issues, elite interviews, documentary analysis, and, if possible, observation are more useful than surveys (cf. Kitschelt 1989a: appendix).

In other words, survey techniques lend themselves to a more "individualist" approach to the study of left-libertarian mobilization, emphasizing the behavior, perception, and views of the militants. In contrast, different research methods are more conducive to organizational analysis with a "collectivist" thrust. Ideally, individualist and collectivist

methodologies complement each other to generate a valid analysis of party politics.

Our study is divided into nine chapters. In the first chapter we will sketch our theory of party politics that guides the empirical investigation and discuss our data sources. In the second chapter we will introduce the Belgian political system and the historical development of Agalev and Ecolo in the briefest possible way. Chapter 3 identifies the three sub-groups of party activists that, according to our theory, influence the political process and outlook of political parties and compare their relative strength in Agalev and Ecolo. Chapter 4 explores the activists' beliefs about policy issues and party strategy and relates them to their broader ideological predilections. Chapter 5 analyzes the militants' social background and socioeconomic resource. Here we show a moderate link between political stance and sociological background. Chapter 6 retraces the initial politicization and extraparty involvement of Agalev and Ecolo activists in social movements and protest events and relates these to the present intraparty groups. Chapter 7 examines the structures of participation in ecology parties and shows how different groups of activists get involved in party politics. Chapter 8 turns to the recruitment of the party leadership and tries to demonstrate how different intraparty groups affect the choice of leaders. Chapter 9 summarizes essential findings and addresses the question to what extent left-libertarian parties differ from most conventional European parties.

On the whole, then, the present study has three tasks ranging from very specific to quite general objectives. First, it explores political action in two West European ecology parties and thus contributes to the cumulation of knowledge and data on the new cohort of political parties. Second, it tries to identify common attributes characterizing all left-libertarian parties which may set them apart from the conventional European parties. Finally, it makes a contribution to the general theoretical explanation of party behavior and thus offers a framework for the comparative analysis of parties in contemporary democracies. In this respect we are especially eager to emphasize that social mobilization and intraparty ideas make a difference for party organization and strategy, although this influence has often been overlooked by party literature exclusively concerned with the competitive imperatives of party politics.

1 A Theory of Party Activism

Research on political parties as organizations with internal decisionmaking structures and research on parties as competitors in party systems have been by and large divorced from each other or linked through extremely simplifying and often misleading assumptions.¹ With the intellectual hegemony of “realist” elite theories of democracy in the tradition of Michels (1911/1962), Weber (1920/1978), Schumpeter (1942), and Downs (1957), parties have been predominantly treated as vehicles in the electoral competition to convert votes into the control of legislative and executive office. According to this view, party organizations and activists must comply with the functional imperatives of vote and office maximization or are condemned to failure. Parties that survive the electoral competition choose *efficient* organizational forms.

The functional model of party competition leads to an *equilibrium model of party organization and strategy*. Given an exogenous voter demand for political positions, parties will seek the most efficient organization, strategy, and policy position to capture the greatest share of the vote and of political office. Since all parties compete for essentially the same pool of uncommitted voters, they will adopt similar organizational forms, strategies, and policy mixes that prove successful in the fight for these constituencies (Duverger 1954; Kirchheimer 1966).

Contrary to some conceptualizations (Wright 1971), however, it is unlikely that there is a single “rational-efficient” form of party organization. The institutional designs of political regimes—such as voting rules, constitutional relations between executive and legislature, and state centralization—lead to variations in the organizational forms that promise electoral efficiency (Harmel and Janda 1982). Moreover, declining party identification, changing voter demands, and new technological means of appealing to voters, primarily the mass media, may have changed what counts as efficient party organization over time. In fact, such trends have been held responsible for a general decline of party organization as the vehicle of electoral mobilization and democratic politics (Sjoeblom 1983; Mair 1983).

The major shortcoming of the functional explanations of party politics, however, is that they offer little guidance for understanding how parties translate functional imperatives and constraints into their actual internal organization and decisionmaking process. In other words, what is needed is a micrologic of political choice in parties which explains why and how political actors select efficient electoral strategies. This micrologic would provide a crucial linkage between the functional analysis of the party system and the structural analysis of party organization and decisionmaking.

Several rational choice theories have tried to build such a linkage between electoral competition and intraparty politics. These proposals start with the premise that parties consist of “leaders” and “followers.” Leaders are party members who hold or compete for electoral office. Followers are all party members who support electoral campaigns and contribute to the party organization. Leaders and followers are driven by different incentives and psychological orientations. Leaders, in general, derive personal satisfaction from the income, status, and power that come with elected office. It is rational for them to endorse the party organization and strategy they expect to optimize winning political office. Followers, however, do not receive, and often do not even aspire to, the gratifications of political office. What keeps them com-

mitted to contribute to a political party? Three answers to this question stand out.

Selective incentive theory. Followers are not really interested in political influence and the party's collective purposes but in "side-payments" such as solidarity and community or the spoils of patronage.² Hence, they will go along with the party leaders' political strategy, as long as selective rewards are forthcoming.

Uncertainty of choice. Since public policy change brought about by elected party leaders is a highly indirect, uncertain mode of compensating party activists for their efforts, activists cannot rationally calculate the balance between the cost and the benefits of their contributions to parties. Hence, militants are typically individuals for whom the opportunity costs of party activism are low, such as young people, students, retirees, or individuals in professions with high time sovereignty, such as lawyers and journalists (cf. Schlesinger, 1984).

Activists as ideological zealots. Party followers are driven by purposive commitments to the parties' overall goals, regardless of the consequences for the parties' electoral performance. Because activists value the parties' objectives so intensely, the cost of participation appears very low.

Selective incentives and uncertainty of choice explain how party leaders can pursue electoralist strategies, regardless of the political goals their followers endorse. In practice, however, many militants are highly intelligent, sophisticated political individuals who support parties for purposive reasons. The prominence of purposive commitments leads to the following puzzle: Why would ideological zealots support a pragmatic leadership driven by electoral success? Both Marxists and conservatives have cast the answer to this question in the same empirical terms but given it diametrically opposed normative evaluations.³ Party leaders are constrained in their pursuit of electoral success by the need of support from ideologically inspired party militants. This constraint can be held at bay only through oligarchical control of the rank and file. "Oligarchy," in this strong sense, is not only the rule of the few over the many, but also the imposition of the leaders' distinctive self-interest in political office on party activists motivated by policy objectives. For (disappointed) leftists from Michels and Luxemburg to the New Left critics of modern parties (cf. Agnoli and Brückner 1967; Greven 1977), leadership control is a scandalous suppression of democracy. For conser-

vatives party oligarchy is a necessary instrument to make elected party leaders responsive to a broad national electorate rather than an unrepresentative, overly zealous, comparatively small band of party followers without democratic mandate (McKenzie 1982).

Rather than taking sides in this controversy, we will argue that the leader/follower dichotomy on which radicals and conservatives agree is analytically ill-conceived and provides little help for linking the internal dynamic of political parties to the overall competitive dynamic of party systems. Party activists are not simply dupes or zealots who can be coerced into following a policy or kept ignorant about the actions of their leaders. We must put politics and debates about political objectives back into the study of intraparty relations.

First, it is not useful to treat rank-and-file activists as a uniform mass committed to the same political objective. There is usually a significant spread of opinions among party activists, and “moderates” with electoralist preferences often outnumber “radicals” in intraparty struggles. Party activists may affiliate with parties not necessarily because they are “alienated” from mainstream society, but because they may wish to pull a party further into the mainstream. Especially in multiparty systems, it is not clear that purposive motivations to join parties must lead to greater radicalism.⁴ What needs to be explained, then, are the different viewpoints represented by intraparty groups and their ability to form coalitions that govern the party organization and strategy.

Second, the leader/follower dichotomy helps us little to explain the change of party strategies and intraparty coalitions over time and across parties. When activists are treated as a uniform mass, all changes of strategic posture must be attributed to electoral constraints. Parties are nothing but a passive medium of electoral constituencies.⁵ Third, it is not always true that party leaders are more oriented toward electoral efficiency than their followers. Party leaders often reflect the militants’ positions, are not a unified group, and express varying commitments to electoralist strategies. The assumption of rational choice approaches that leaders try to maximize “private” goods (wealth, status, power), as, for instance, expressed in Downs’s (1957: 34) work, requires reconsideration. It is dangerously close to Marxist-Leninist conspiracy theories, according to which a corrupt party leadership betrays the naturally revolutionary masses. Such arguments do no justice to the complexities of political choice in parties.

Fourth, the leader/follower dichotomy does not take into account that party leaders sometimes have good reasons to pursue a political strategy that maximizes not votes and elected office, but policy impact. In many

contemporary democracies, parties have other tasks and ways to influence politics than to mobilize the vote. They recruit future political leaders, organize linkages to interest groups, control the civil service, and exercise power over policymaking through corporatist bargaining modes. The leader/follower dichotomy helps us little to understand how parties choose a position if they face trade-offs between office and policy.

Fifth, electoral competition theories assume that voters' electoral preferences are somehow independent from the parties' political choices. Although this may be the case in the short run, over time parties and party leaders may place new issues on the political agenda and refashion the electorate's views. Thus, while a party's policy positions may appear irrational from the perspective of short-term electoral success, they may or may not pay off in the long run, both in terms of electoral and policy gains.⁶

Finally, organizational incentives theories in general and the leader/follower dichotomy in particular assume that activists have exogenously given preferences and aspirations. But involvement in parties is often a *process of conflictual debate and consensus building* in which the purposes and the cognitive frameworks that activists employ to assess the rationality of political strategies are at stake. In this sense party politics is a process of mutual influencing among activists in which the individuals' goals themselves are variable and shaped by the collective process.⁷

The shortcomings of rational choice reconstructions of intraparty decisions should stimulate the search for alternative approaches. In the existing literature behavioral studies have constituted the most important contender. They emphasize the multiplicity of intraparty groups and political tendencies. They show empirically that parties are not tightly integrated, disciplined agencies, but loose sets of subcoalitions which cooperate in a minimally efficient way. The dominant political strategy of a party, then, results from the relative strength and interaction of multiple subgroups of activists.⁸ While the behavioral framework is rich at the descriptive level, it contributes little to a theoretical understanding of party dynamic or to explaining why certain party groups or tendencies dominate. It also does not provide a theory why some parties appear to be loosely coupled coalitions while others are hierarchically structured.

What we are looking for, then, is an approach which can preserve some of the theoretical parsimony of the rational choice literature while making more realistic and empirically plausible propositions. A theory which combines the important insights of both behavioral and rational

choice theories should meet the following three criteria. (1) It should explicitly recognize different purposes and motivations for joining parties and theoretically reconstruct rank-and-file group pluralism within parties. (2) Yet it should avoid being overly descriptive and inductive. And (3), at the same time, it should specify conditions and processes under which the balance between groups of party activists and, as a consequence, the composition of a party's leadership, its organization, and its external strategy are likely to change.

In this study we will not attempt to present an encompassing, comprehensive theory but focus on three key elements of internal party dynamics.⁹ First, we will specify three groups of party activists with different political orientations that will be used to reconstruct intraparty decisionmaking. Second, we will determine different patterns of party activism that we expect to covary with adherence to each of the groups. Third, we will introduce one of several hypotheses explaining why the composition and coalition behavior of intraparty groups may vary across time and place.

Actors and Objectives

Party activists have different commitments and aspirations. They may be inspired by a party's *collective goods*, its commitment to broad changes in society affecting the life chances of most citizens (overall party program). Or they may value the provision of *selective goods* for specific, well-defined electoral clienteles and focus on strategic and tactical gains on behalf of these clienteles. Moreover, they may be concerned with the party's internal gratifications or *private goods*, primarily the symbolic reinforcement of purposive commitments and social solidarity that can be derived from a party organization which faithfully reflects the ideological beliefs of party activists. Depending on the content, the weight, and the rank-ordering of programmatic, strategic, and organizational concerns, we can construct three ideal types of party activists: ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists.

Ideologues emphasize collective goods, yet see little value in the provision of selective goods. For them piecemeal reforms diminish the chance of overall change. Ideologues also value the private good of a party organization that reinforces purposive commitments. If the party organization creates a microcosm of social institutions and a culture of solidarity that anticipates how, according to the party program, future society should be governed, the party offers a bridge between ideology and practice. Barred from realizing their vision of societal transforma-

tion immediately, ideologues will therefore spend considerable energy on maintaining the purity of the party's organizational form.

Lobbyists value the provision of selective goods and incremental, short-term changes benefiting specific external constituencies, such as class (segments), interest groups, and regional clienteles. To modify a statement by Eduard Bernstein, a revisionist German social democrat writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, for lobbyists the process of providing benefits for party constituencies is everything and the final goals of radically transforming existing society are (almost) nothing. Hence, lobbyists tend to choose strategies and tactics opportunistically. When a party is politically too weak to bring about incremental policy gains, lobbyists may appreciate the party organization as a source of internal gratification and a guarantee of the party's honest support of their aspirations. In general lobbyists attribute least importance to the party's comprehensive objectives for social change, but focus on organizational and policy matters relevant for their party's daily activities.

Pragmatists, finally, share with ideologues a concern for the party's universalistic program and reject the lobbyists' emphasis on special interests, but see a productive, mutually reinforcing relationship, rather than a trade-off, between a balanced policy of incremental change through selective goods and overall social transformation. Since pragmatists place high value on tangible policy accomplishments, they favor moderate political strategies and have no appreciation for the internal benefits of an ideologically pure party organization.

Pragmatists are oriented toward a "logic of party competition" designed to maximize voter support or the gain of political office as the only viable rationale of party politics. At the other end of the scale ideologues prefer a "logic of constituency representation" in which parties appeal only to their most committed and mobilized supporters and fashion the party organization in accordance with this objective. Between these poles we encounter lobbyists who choose between both logics opportunistically and, hence, are available for alliances with ideologues or pragmatists, depending on which group can offer them most in terms of satisfying special group interests.

Patterns of Party Activism

Ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists differ not only in their political beliefs, but also their political careers and involvement in party politics. Ideologues are often a party's "organic intellectuals" (Gramsci) and

emerge from the radical mobilized subcultures associated with it. Lobbyists, on the other hand, tend to be recruited from the mass movements and voluntary associations in the orbit of a party, such as labor unions, churches, business associations, or environmental protection groups. Pragmatists, finally, tend to have fewer roots in the mass or elite subcultures that constitute a party's core constituency and often lack political experience outside their own party.

The three types of militants are also likely to engage in different patterns of intraparty activism. Ideologues, expressing much concern for organizational and programmatic questions, will be most interested in the national party organization where key issues of overall party policy and strategy are discussed. Yet pragmatists, with an inclination toward small-scale, incremental social change, will be more willing to work in the local party organization and local politics where almost imperceptible social reforms are the bread-and-butter issues of the day. Lobbyists will try to maintain their strong affiliation with political associations external to the party and devote more time to movement than party activism. They often act as spokespeople for external pressure groups inside the party.

Patterns of involvement in party affairs also coincide with different preferences for gaining political office. Most ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists strive for electoral office in national legislatures. These offices are most highly valued because they offer access to the mass media, a national political audience, and, depending on a party's competitiveness and government institutions, influence over government policy. Inside the party ideologues are most attracted to national party office because it allows them to act on their organizational and programmatic concerns. Pragmatists, in contrast, are more inclined to assume local electoral office, which follows from their preoccupation with local party work. Lobbyists see less merit in party offices and may also be less inclined to assume local electoral office than pragmatists. But they wish to be nationally elected representatives of their party, just as their fellow ideologues and pragmatists. Of course, the outcome of recruitment to political office depends not only on the *supply* of candidates, but also on the *demand* of openings to be filled, the *preferences* of the party activists, and the *rules* that govern the selection process. In chapter 8 we will further explore how demand for office, supply of office, preferences, and rules influence the representation of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists in a party's leadership.

Overall, then, we expect a correlation between the activists' ideological orientation and their participation, aspirations, and assessments in

party politics. Activists opting for radical social change and a logic of constituency representation should have different political background experiences, propensities of party activism, and inclinations to seek and (sometimes) to gain political office than lobbyists or pragmatists. None of the arguments and propositions presented so far, however, tells us *how strong* each of the three groups will be in a given political party. To some extent the size and weight of each group and its ability to form alliances with other groups depends on the internal debates and strategic moves inside the parties, as well as on processes of socialization and indoctrination. Yet intraparty groups are also affected by external conditions and strategic situations in a party's environment. We will discuss one of several external conditions which is particularly important for our empirical investigation of the balance of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists in ecology parties.

Cleavage Mobilization and Intraparty Groups

Parties do not develop in a social vacuum but emerge from patterns of socioeconomic stratification, structures of political domination, and cultural identities that shape the demands and visions of their constituencies. In political sociology economic, political, and cultural group divisions that potentially give rise to party formation are called cleavages. A cleavage is highly mobilized when it divides public opinion sharply, gives rise to sizable organized subcultures, interest groups, or social movements, and leads to political protest events. One of the best measures of cleavage mobilization is open group conflict over the rules of political decisionmaking in a society and basic policies of distributing valued collective resources to the adversaries. The incidence of hostilities between conflicting groups reflects deep societal divisions more clearly than the distribution of attitudes or the formal organization of group segments.¹⁰

It is important to understand that such cleavages, at least in part, *precede* party formation and shape the opportunities and constraints for party action. Conversely, however, parties are usually able to influence the extent to which certain cleavages are articulated in the population and contribute to the mobilization or demobilization of group divisions. Nevertheless, a voluntaristic position that cleavages are a consequence of party politics would overstate the capacity of parties to create social alignments.¹¹ Newly emerging or ideologically readjusting parties more often follow than shape changes in their external environment.

Our main hypothesis is that the internal composition of parties—the

relative strength of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists and their ability to form coalitions with each other—is influenced by the mobilization of the social cleavages and external constituency groups a party tries to represent in the electoral arena. Great hostility between social groups gives rise to radical visions for social change and a centrifugal dynamic of conflict escalation. As a consequence, parties representing such polarized cleavages are likely to attract more ideologues and lobbyists, whereas pragmatists, advocating moderation and compromise, remain marginal. The two dominant groups form a coalition supporting a logic of constituency representation.

In a longitudinal perspective, as cleavage mobilization increases, the relative weight of ideologues in a party will rise at the pragmatists' expense. Such trends may be due to external events not controlled by the party, but may also be due to the (unintentional) effects of past party strategies and policies. For example, if parties are governed by pragmatists, but fail to accomplish incremental and widely distributed gains for their constituencies, the internal position of pragmatists is likely to weaken. Conversely, where parties rely on weak cleavages or actively work to deemphasize cleavages, the share of pragmatists among party militants is likely to go up. The end point of that development is marked by what Kirchheimer (1966) called the “catch-all” party which is dominated by pragmatists, is reluctant to change the status quo, and involves very few lobbyists or ideologues.

The extent of cleavage mobilization in competitive democracies varies sufficiently to identify its effect on the ideological composition, organization, and strategy of parties. The organizational form and strategic stance of socialist parties, for instance, is associated with the level and orientation of workers' organization in labor unions, labor protest events, class consciousness, and class voting. In the case of ecology parties the mobilization of left-libertarian protest, such as women's, environmental, peace, or countercultural movements, and the incidence of protest manifestations is likely to interact with the parties' organization and strategy. Where external cleavage mobilization is high, left-libertarian parties will put more emphasis on a decentralized, participatory organizational form and are less willing to compromise with other parties than where cleavage mobilization is subdued.

Of course, there are a number of other external conditions and political variables that influence the relative size, coalition behavior, and dominance of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists in political parties. One of them is the responsiveness of political regimes to the demands of political parties and their constituencies. Where political institutions and

elites are amenable to the participation of radical political forces within the existing channels of decisionmaking and policy formation, it is likely that parties challenging the status quo undergo a process of deradicalization in which they alter their strategy and organization from a logic of constituency representation to a logic of party competition. Elite intransigence, in contrast, breeds political polarization.

Another factor affecting a party's organizational form and course of action is its strategic importance for the game of government formation. Electoral rules as well as the number, relative size, and ideological distribution of parties in a parliamentary democracy determine electoral competitiveness: How (in)dispensable is a party for the formation and maintenance of a viable government (coalition)? What benefits can a party derive from alliances with some of its competitors? The stronger a party's competitive position in the game of government formation, the more likely the party is to attract pragmatists and be dominated by a coalition choosing moderate electoral strategies.

Cleavage mobilization, regime responsiveness, and competitive position, of course, are partly endogenous variables influenced by a party's past strategies and policies. In this sense all external conditions in a party's environment are also dependent on the party's internal choices.

In order to test the complex causal interplay between intraparty coalition formation and strategic choice, on the one hand, and external constraints and opportunities for action, on the other, a cross-national and longitudinal comparison of party behavior would be required. Since we will compare only two parties representing the same cleavage in one country at a single point in time, our research design cannot test a dynamic, interactive model of party organization and strategy. Instead, our research design and data permit us to investigate only a limited set of hypotheses following from the theoretical framework we have sketched. First, we wish to show that ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists are useful ideal types to describe the distribution of objectives in political parties. We will explore the extent to which these types correlate with the party militants' pathways into politics and their patterns of behavior in ecological politics. Second, we will use the concept of cleavage mobilization in order to explain differences in the group structure of the Belgian ecology parties Agalev and Ecolo. We will argue that in Flanders where left-libertarian cleavage mobilization is higher the proportion of ideologues and lobbyists in party politics is greater than in Wallonia. Finally, we will attempt to link differences in the parties' group structures to their organizational and strategic process. Agalev, operating in an environment of greater left-libertarian protest mobilization, is also

the party that comes closer to an organizational and strategic logic of constituency mobilization, whereas Ecolo in Wallonia is more inclined to follow a logic of party competition. In other words overall left-libertarian ideology leaves a greater imprint on Agalev's organizational practice. Agalev exhibits more traits of a decentralized, participatory party organization and endorses more strategic radicalism than Ecolo. Theoretically, our three hypotheses test the chain of causation that links cleavage mobilization, internal group structure, party organization, and strategic outlook (see figure 1-1).

Compared to such countries as Denmark, the Netherlands, or West Germany, Belgian left-libertarian cleavage mobilization is relatively limited. Even Agalev, therefore, may have a more conventional party structure than left-libertarian parties in these countries, as can be shown by comparing the German Greens to the Belgian ecology parties.¹² Nevertheless, the differences between Flanders and Wallonia are sufficiently significant to expect a variance in the Belgian parties' group base, organization, and strategic orientation that should be explicable in terms of the theory we have sketched above.

Operationalizing the Theory: Parties as a Research Site

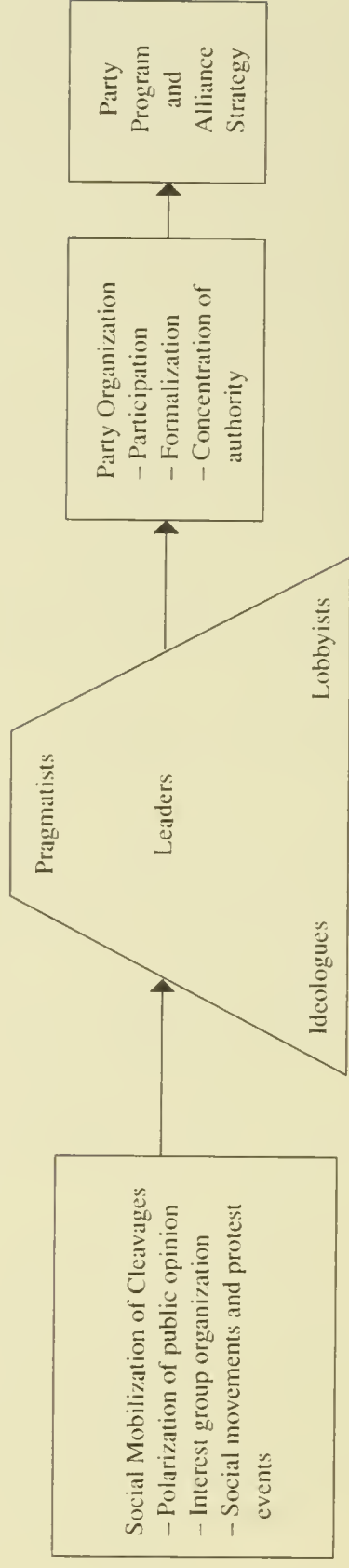
To date no detailed survey analyses of ecology parties have been published. Also work on the older New Left parties belonging to the left-libertarian party cohort has been limited.¹³ These studies relied on questionnaires sent to a sample of all party members or circulated among activists attending party conferences. In order to capture the internal group structure of parties and the organizational process, it is desirable to target as varied a sample of party members as possible. The sample should include a vertical spread of respondents, ranging from rank-and-file members to the formal party leadership. Moreover, in the horizontal dimension militants in different regions and local party organizations should be covered in the survey.

For reasons of practicality we settled for a "second best" strategy of data collection by circulating a questionnaire among the attendants of Agalev and Ecolo conferences rather than by targeting a sample of the entire membership. As we will argue in a moment, however, it is plausible that this sample quite reasonably reflects the composition and operation of the entire party, although we cannot exclude slight distortions.

Our procedure of data collection followed common survey methodol-

Figure 1-1 A Theoretical Model Linking the Internal and External Politics of Parties

Intraparty Groups and Coalitions



ogy. We pretested a questionnaire in French and in Dutch among a small group of party activists and took their advice on how to eliminate ambiguities of interpretation. The party executives had a chance to review our questionnaire. Although some members raised objections against select items in the survey, our project was endorsed without alterations. We then distributed the revised questionnaire to the participants of Agalev's and Ecolo's conferences before the 1985 Belgian national elections on August 31 (Agalev) and September 1, 1985 (Ecolo). Militants filled out the questionnaires without interviewer assistance. The party secretariats helped us to distribute the forms and collect the completed questionnaires during the conference.

Our questionnaire addresses five sets of issues. First, we asked activists about their socioeconomic and cultural background and upbringing. Second, we explored the activists' trajectory of mobilization into political activism, particularly the left-libertarian social movement sector. Third, we surveyed the activists' patterns of participation in the parties. Fourth, we analyzed three dimensions of their belief systems, that is, their evaluation of the party organization, their preferences for political strategy, and their views on a battery of policy issues. And fifth, we asked militants to list the party or elected offices they have held in Agalev and Ecolo. What we are interested in are the linkages between the background of individual activists, forms of extraparty and intraparty participation, ideology, and office holding.

We must emphasize that our questionnaire had to be designed so that the activists were able to complete it within less than one hour while the conference was proceeding. For this reason we had to limit the range of questions to those we found absolutely necessary. We also took great care in selecting issues and questions that related directly to the activists' horizon of meaningful political action in order to increase the probability that the questionnaires were actually completed. These conditions led us to exclude a number of scales and survey measures that otherwise have proven useful in American or even cross-national research on political participation and party activism.¹⁴

In 1985 when the survey was carried out, each of the two parties had about 1000 card-carrying members. According to estimates released by the parties' secretariats, about 250 militants participated in Agalev's fall preelection conference and about 150 in Ecolo's convention. Thus, our sample of 256 completed and usable questionnaires represents about 13 percent of all party members and about 60 percent of the conference participants (table 1-1).

The yield of completed questionnaires among the conference partici-

Table 1-1 Agalev and Ecolo Members, Conference Participants, and Interviewees

	Agalev	Ecolo	Total
Members	about 1,000	about 1,000	about 2,000
Conference Participants	about 250	about 150	about 400
Interviewees	162	94	256

pants does not exceed 60 percent for several reasons. Since conference attendance was open to all party members, it tended to fluctuate considerably during the meeting as militants arrived late or departed early. As a consequence, a number of participants were not present when the questionnaires were initially distributed or when they were collected. Moreover, some activists might not have found time to complete the rather lengthy questionnaire or simply forgot to return it on their own initiative. In light of these conditions a return of 60 percent is quite satisfactory. It is unlikely that our sample of conference participants systematically distorts the overall composition of party militants attending the conferences.

It is possible, however, that the survey is not representative of *all* activists and members in Agalev and Ecolo. Elite interviews and participatory observation in local party units suggest that locally oriented activists often do not attend national conferences, although all party members are invited to attend. Moreover, interviewees often notice that the personal resources militants can bring to bear on political activism, particularly disposable time, education, information, and political self-confidence, vary dramatically and disadvantage party members with little resources who consequently might stay away from national party meetings. Thus, it is likely that both “localists” and militants with limited political resources are underrepresented in our sample. Nevertheless, we believe that these distortions do not seriously damage the value of our study for at least four reasons.

1. *The sampling bias is limited.* This is partially due to the open access of all militants to the conference which rules out organizational filters and screens that could distort our sample. Moreover, the specific conferences at which our questionnaires were distributed had a wider appeal—also to localists—than many preceding conferences. As pre-election conferences, they came at a time of high political mobilization and thus attracted a considerable interest in the parties. Further, since

Belgian parties usually present much larger slates of candidates in each electoral district they contest than seats they hope to win, small parties such as Agalev and Ecolo place a considerable proportion of their members on the electoral lists. Most of these candidates have no realistic chance to win office, and they are recruited from the local party membership (see chapter 8). Yet many of those only formally placed on the electoral list may feel a moral obligation to attend the party conference preceding the election. This may explain why no less than 25 percent of all Agalev members and 16 percent of the Ecolo members attended the conferences. Among them, 40 to 50 percent indicate that they are primarily active in local rather than national party politics. Thus, our sample clearly reaches out beyond a narrow stratum of national or regional party leaders.

2. *Our survey includes “second best” tests of sample bias.* For instance, a sample of conference participants may overrepresent younger single militants compared to the entire population of party members. If this was true, however, we should also find systematic relations between sociodemographic background and the frequency of conference participation among those who completed the questionnaire. We can determine whether people who claim to participate “often” or “always” in party conferences have different social status and resources than those who indicate they “rarely” participate. On the whole, social resources, by themselves, explain very little variance in party activism among the participants in the 1985 party conferences. As we will show, however, political background, type of involvement, and ideological orientation explain a significant share of the statistical variance when we try to account for the views of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists.

3. Our questionnaire asked the attending militants to *compare conference participants to nonparticipants in their local party sections* with respect to social resources (age, education, family/child commitments). In table 1-2 militants see only a substantially higher level of education among conference participants as compared to nonparticipants. Yet they perceive little political bias, although there is a slight tendency, particularly in Ecolo, to believe that conference participants are more radical than nonparticipants. Moreover, the respondents claim that militants at the conference are more locally active than those who stayed home. In other words our questionnaire did reach the “localists” who normally do not participate in national party affairs. We were unable to reach, however, the segment of generally less involved marginal party activists.

4. *The sample bias in Agalev and Ecolo is the same; hence, tests of*

comparative propositions about the two parties cannot be influenced by sample bias. In both parties questionnaires were distributed in the same way at conferences with exactly the same political significance, agenda, and timing. A comparison of the two parties should therefore be valid.

The moderate, but evident sampling bias of our survey has a statistically undesirable effect. Because marginal and maybe local activists are probably underrepresented, the sample *biases our findings against our theoretical hypotheses.* The variance between political pathways into the party, patterns of activism, and political outlooks is probably *smaller* among the sampled conference activists than in the entire population of party members. In our statistical analysis this predicament is likely to reduce the percentage of variance our hypotheses are able to explain. The more homogeneous a sample is to begin with, the higher tends to be the percentage of the registered variance that is due to mere “random noise” rather than systematic relationships between measured variables. Knowing this bias, however, should sensitize us even to relatively modest significant relationships among variables that lend support to our hypotheses. Where we find a significant differentiation of groups in the parties, we would argue that these contours would be much sharper and statistically more clearly articulated had we been able to draw on a true random sample of Agalev and Ecolo activists.

Our theoretical framework requires an interpretation of both aggregate differences between Agalev and Ecolo as well as individual-level relations between the militants’ experiences, party activism, and political views. We employ only one generically aggregate variable, Agalev or Ecolo membership. Although this variable contains property names, it is, as we will argue in the next chapter, closely related to our theoretical construct of *cleavage mobilization* as a determinant of whether parties tend to follow a logic of constituency representation or a logic of party competition. Whereas many comparative studies of political participation *undertheorize* their contextual aggregate variables and focus on universal context-free links among individual-level variables, we would like to emphasize the theoretical as well as empirical link between both levels of analysis.¹⁵

The political context of cleavage mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia can affect our analysis in two different ways. First, focusing on the aggregate level alone, the means, medians, and frequency distributions of the values on variables measuring political backgrounds, behavior, and attitudes vary across the two parties. Differences between Agalev and Ecolo can then be interpreted in light of varying left-libertarian cleavage mobilization.¹⁶

Table 1-2 How Representative Are Conference Participants for All Party Activists? (in percentages)

Compared to members of your local party group not attending the conference, those who do attend are, on average, . . .	Agalev	Ecolo
Age		
(Much) older ^a	14 (18) ^b	12 (8)
Same age	73 (95)	77 (50)
(Much) younger ^a	14 (18)	10 (7)
Average value (range 1–5)	3.04	2.95
Education		
(Much) more educated ^a	28 (35)	30 (19)
Equally educated	66 (82)	64 (41)
(Much) less educated ^a	5 (6)	6 (4)
Average value (range 1–5)	2.73	2.76
Raise children		
More children	13 (17)	19 (12)
Same number of children	64 (83)	60 (39)
Fewer children	22 (29)	21 (13)
Average value (range 2–4)	3.07	3.02
Political radicalism		
(Much) more radical ^a	19 (25)	19 (12)
Equally radical	71 (94)	71 (44)
(Much) less radical ^a	10 (13)	10 (6)
Average value (range 1–5)	2.91	2.85
Local party activism		
(Much) more active ^a	43 (60)	54 (34)
Equally active	41 (57)	36 (23)
(Much) less active ^a	16 (21)	11 (7)
Average value (range 1–5)	2.70	2.85

^aTwo values collapsed in one.

^bNumber of respondents in each category.

Missing cases are the difference between the total number of interviews (Agalev: 162; Ecolo: 94) and the number of cases reported for each item and each party. In Agalev they range from 24 to 39 cases, in Ecolo from 32 to 34. In equal shares missing cases are due to either (1) no response/do not know or (2) impossible to compare because only one respondent was present from the local group.

Second, in bi- and multivariate analyses we examine the relationships among individual-level variables within each party separately. Contextual factors enter the investigation of individual-level variables in two ways. First, individual-level correlations can be the same in both parties, for example, between types of activists and patterns of political action. Ideologues in both parties are more likely to participate in protest events than other activists, and, at the aggregate level, Agalev militants are on average more involved in protest than their Ecolo colleagues (chapter 6). The interparty difference is accounted for by the fact that Agalev recruits more ideologues than Ecolo. Differential recruitment into the parties, a contextual condition, is the link explaining why similar individual-level correlations between ideological disposition and protest action lead to different aggregate outcomes.

Second, political context can directly intervene in the correlations among individual-level variables. For example, only in Agalev do members of party executives tend to be more radical than nonmembers (chapter 8). Here, too, we seek a contextual explanation, but differential recruitment of party activists is insufficient. We must, instead, explore intermediate linkages. Since the number of ideologues in Ecolo is small, this may lead to a party organization and power distribution that makes it difficult for ideologues to get into leading political offices altogether. Context thus shapes the ability of individual militants to engage in certain political activities.

These examples show that we put great emphasis not only on individual-level relations between the ideological attributes and the behavior of militants, but also on the interaction between political context and individual orientations.¹⁷ In addition, of course, we are also interested in common features of both ecology parties that appear regardless of context and type of party activist. These commonalities reveal “central tendencies” in left-libertarian politics which can be compared to what we know about conventional mass parties in Belgium and other European countries. We will briefly return to this contrast in the conclusion to this study.

2 Belgian Ecology Parties: Setting and Background

Left-libertarian parties appear in advanced democracies when social transformation and political institutions bring about a *demand* for left-libertarian politics. Whether this demand, however, leads to the formation of new parties depends on the *opportunities* competitive democracies offer to the articulation of left-libertarian politics. Belgium has provided a favorable political structure for the rise of left-libertarian parties, although the mobilization of social movements with left-libertarian demands has been generally quite modest, when compared to other European countries. Yet left-libertarian demand patterns vary between Flanders and Wallonia. In Flanders a more lively movement sector has spawned greater concern with left-libertarian politics than in Wallonia. As a consequence, Agalev and Ecolo grew in different ways out of the Flemish and Walloon social movements of the 1970s.

Opportunities for Left-Libertarian Politics

Comparing all advanced Western democracies, the rise of left-libertarian parties is closely linked to economic affluence and the existence of large welfare states, corporatist interest intermediation between business, labor, and the state, participation of the major left party in government, and the rise of left-libertarian movements, especially of antinuclear power movements (Kitschelt 1988a). Economic affluence increases the demand for left-libertarian politics, while political institutions affect the opportunities left-libertarian activists may seize upon to build new parties.

In Belgium political institutions revolve around the organization and role of “pillarized” political parties. Due to the multiplicity of salient cleavages (religion, class, language) in the process of industrial modernization and political mobilization, Belgium developed highly structured, centralized, and self-contained subcultures organizing their members’ social and political life from cradle to grave (cf. Huyse 1970). Friendly societies, religious and cultural organizations, consumer cooperatives, and sports clubs were all created around the separate “worlds” of Catholicism, liberalism, or socialism. In the Catholic and socialist cases these subcultures resulted from the increasing differentiation of modern society and, at least indirectly, constituted defensive, collectivist bonds of mutual support directed against the onslaught of industrialization that was promoted by the dominant liberal elites of the century. With the advent of capitalist society and the widening of suffrage in the 1880s, these subcultures gave rise to socialist and Catholic mass membership organizations and parties that decisively reduced the electoral strength of the liberals. Over the ensuing decades the institutional cohesiveness of organized pillars increased and peaked in the 1950s (Hellemans 1985a).

The rise of subcultural pillars around hierarchical parties and interest associations in a competitive democracy promotes a policy style that Lijphart (1977a) has labeled “consociational.” While the rank and file of each pillar remain separate and rarely communicate beyond their own segments, the elites at the helm of each political segment engage in mutual negotiations to arrange policy compromises. Structural conditions, such as the number and size of the pillars (Lijphart 1977a) as well as the peculiar economic and military vulnerability of small countries in the international system (Katzenstein 1984), have facilitated the rise of consociationalism in small European democracies. In Belgium consociationalism reached its peak after World War II, when major policy

issues dividing the societal segments (labor relations, church influence over the school system) were settled by peak-level bargaining among the elites representing each pillar.

In the process of pillarization each pillar, and especially the parties around which they were organized, began to penetrate into the state administration and “colonize” public services. For instance, social service organizations, health care systems, and unemployment insurance are run by pillar organizations on behalf of the Belgian state. The pillars acquired control over material incentives and patronage that preserved their political importance, even when religious and class polarization were declining from the 1960s onward.¹

While the literature on corporatism and, to a lesser extent, that on consociationalism has focused on the existence of direct negotiations between capital, labor, and state executive and downplayed the importance of political parties and electoral politics for a country’s patterns of political conflict resolution, in Belgium the institutionalization of the class conflict is clearly mediated through the major parties.² Both the Catholic and the socialist parties are linked to strong national union organizations. Even the liberals have a union which is mostly for higher-level managerial and professional employees. On the other side of the class cleavage, the entrepreneurs’ associations are highly centralized (Katzenstein 1984: 106) and have been closely linked to the liberal party until recently. Because the parties are central turntables of the Belgian policy process, critics have labeled the system a “particratie.” In tandem with their considerable power of patronage and executive control in the state apparatus, the parties have created internally centralized organizations headed by powerful party executives directly tied into government and legislative business (cf. Rowies 1975; Ceuleers 1981; De Winter 1981; Dewachter 1987).

Since the early 1960s Belgium’s consociationalism has experienced three challenges (cf. Huyse 1980). The first and most disruptive challenge has been the ethnolinguistic conflict between the French-speaking Walloons and the Dutch-speaking Flemings which builds on old roots (cf. Zolberg 1977, 1978) and has led to an explosive mixture of linguistic, economic, and cultural demands (McRae 1986). The traditionally dominant French-speaking Walloons have gradually encroached on Flemish territory in the area around the capital Brussels, something Flemings call the expanding “Brussels oilstain.” At the same time, Flanders has become economically more prosperous and culturally self-assertive and turned increasingly reluctant to subsidize the ailing rust-belt industries of Wallonia. On top of these old-standing problems the ethnolinguistic

conflict fed into left-libertarian demands in the late 1960s, when it was linked to demands for societal decentralization and democratization (cf. Lijphart 1977b). Emerging outside the existing rigid Catholic, liberal, and socialist pillars, the ethnolinguistic conflict provided an excellent launching pad for left-libertarian opposition to the Belgian system of paternalist elite concertation.

A second challenge to Belgian politics since the late 1960s constitutes the decline of its corporatist industrial relations system to which the ethnolinguistic conflicts and Belgium's weakening competitiveness in the international economy, particularly that of Wallonia, contributed in the 1970s (cf. Van den Brande 1987). As a consequence, negotiations between unions and employers have become more difficult and strikes more common, the leading socialist and Catholic unions have loosened their ties to the parties that correspond to their ideological orientation, and state intervention in collective bargaining has become more direct and compulsory. Nevertheless, concertation continued even during the austerity policy of the liberal-Catholic government between 1982 and 1987, although through more decentralized and informal channels than in the past. Hence, most economic and industrial relations issues still bypass parliamentary deliberation and are resolved in negotiations among functional interest groups.

The third challenge to Belgian politics has been left-libertarian movements and protest events since the late 1960s. Within a hierarchical and elitist system of policy bargaining and "particratie" suffering from a weakening of its subcultural moorings, radically new demands are likely to be mobilized *outside* the existing party channels, as the ethnolinguistic example illustrates. At the same time, due to the high fragmentation of the Belgian party system, the established political elites respond to the rise of new parties by assimilating their themes and demands. Liberals, socialists, and Catholics pursued this accommodative strategy when faced with the competition from the emerging ethnolinguistic parties in the 1960s. Thus, the Belgian party system is conducive to the formation of parties around new demands, but also generates a flexible elite response that slows their political thrust, induces cooperation, and blunts the new parties' radical edges.

The Demand for Left-Libertarian Politics

Theories of postindustrial society have sought to explain the demand for left-libertarian politics by growing prosperity and technological innovation, which change the occupational structure, the use of knowledge in

economic and political institutions, and the individual's life chances in the sphere of social consumption (cf. Bell 1973, 1976; Touraine 1973). As soon as these structural determinants have triggered new social preferences, however, the rise of left-libertarian demands may be a self-reinforcing learning process. Once demands for broader political participation, for citizens' control over the physical shaping of the human environment, and for the creation of individual and collective identities autonomous from expert control encounter resistance from the existing elites and institutions, left-libertarian movements are not only *manifestations* but *catalysts* of left-libertarian demands, disseminating and generalizing them among mass publics. In this sense both structural preconditions and the process of mobilization itself shape preferences for left-libertarian politics.

Economic affluence is certainly a baseline condition which makes people receptive to demands aimed at social improvements unrelated to economic security and wealth. Belgium belongs to the more affluent West European societies with a per capita GNP not far behind that of France, Denmark, and West Germany and well ahead of Britain or Italy. Belgium is also one of the countries with the most comprehensive welfare state. In 1979–80 only four of the eighteen larger OECD countries spent more on social programs than Belgium, which devoted 24.5 percent of its GNP to transfers and social services, putting it ahead of West Germany, Austria, and Norway, not even to mention the United States, Japan, or Britain (ILO 1985).

Yet in terms of economic affluence and security there are significant discrepancies between Flanders, with a modern high-technology-oriented employment profile, and Wallonia, beset by the structural adjustment problems of a declining steel and coal sector. By 1979 the Flemish per capita GNP had surged 18 percent ahead of Wallonia's (McRae 1986: 79). Flanders has higher individual incomes, lower unemployment, and higher savings than Wallonia (ibid.: 79–84). Consequently, in Flanders the potential for left-libertarian political demands has been greater than in Wallonia.

What may counteract affluence as a facilitator of greater Flemish left-libertarian concern is the stronger religious commitment of Flemings. Left-libertarians tend to be secular. In 1975 60 percent of all Flemings but only 32 percent of all Walloons considered themselves to be practicing Catholics, while 8 percent in Flanders and 26 percent in Wallonia declared to be non-Catholic (McRae 1986: 66). According to a 1985 survey, 26.9 percent of Flemings between age five and sixty-nine attend church regularly, compared to only 17.7 percent of the Walloons and

10.6 percent of the inhabitants of Brussels (Dobbelaere 1988: 151–52). Yet it is questionable whether absolute levels of religious commitment or change rates are more important in estimating the potential for left-libertarian action in each region. In Wallonia secular voters have long been firmly linked to socialist or liberal parties, whereas in Flanders a rather steep decline in church attendance is closely associated with reduced electoral support for the once dominant Catholic Christian People's party from above 50 percent of the electorate in the early 1960s to about 30 to 35 percent in the 1980s. This process has set free political energies especially among younger, well-educated Flemings who are not bound to a conventional party and thus available for new left-libertarian courses of action. In contrast, in Wallonia religiosity has declined from a much lower baseline and has not affected the electoral support of liberals, socialists, and Christian democrats as profoundly as in Flanders.

Studies show that secularization in contemporary mass publics is positively associated with postmaterialist preferences that attribute more salience to the protection of civil liberties and political participation than the maintenance of law and order or the containment of inflation on today's policy agendas (Inglehart 1979a: 335–36). Postmaterialist views, in turn, moderately increase the willingness to participate in left-libertarian movements, such as ecology, antinuclear, and peace movements (Inglehart 1979b; 1987b). Given Wallonia's greater secularism, one might expect more support for postmaterialism as well as for left-libertarian politics in that region rather than in Flanders.

Indeed, Eurobarometer surveys show that Wallonia has as great or greater a proportion of postmaterialists as Flanders.³ Postmaterialist value preferences, however, may be too indirectly related to the manifest involvement in left-libertarian protest to serve as a valid indicator of cleavage mobilization. The gap between attitudes and action is often wide. Also in cross-national comparison one can detect little association between the share of postmaterialism in a population and the actual occurrence of left-libertarian protest actions or the rise of left-libertarian parties.⁴ Since we are primarily interested in political behavior, postmaterialist predispositions, taken by themselves, are insufficient indicators of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia.

A similar problem arises when we choose the proportion of survey respondents in Flanders and Wallonia who express support of contemporary nature protection, ecology, antinuclear power, and antinuclear peace movements. International comparison shows that these attitudes have little connection to the individual respondents' actual political

Table 2-1 Regional Support of Left-Libertarian Movements in Belgium in 1982 (in percentages)

	Flanders ^a	Wallonia ^b
1 Sympathy with social movements ^c		
Nature protection	87.8 (<i>N</i> = 557)	98.0 (<i>N</i> = 476)
Ecology movement	79.0 (<i>N</i> = 516)	87.1 (<i>N</i> = 473)
Antinuclear power movement	65.2 (<i>N</i> = 538)	75.6 (<i>N</i> = 460)
Antinuclear peace movement	77.1 (<i>N</i> = 542)	86.6 (<i>N</i> = 459)
2 Has or might consider joining a social movement		
Nature protection	30.1 (<i>N</i> = 509)	15.5 (<i>N</i> = 343)
Ecology movement	22.8 (<i>N</i> = 491)	10.5 (<i>N</i> = 343)
Antinuclear power movement	19.1 (<i>N</i> = 491)	7.1 (<i>N</i> = 353)
Antinuclear peace movement	22.5 (<i>N</i> = 494)	10.3 (<i>N</i> = 349)

^aSurvey respondents living in the regions of Antwerp, Flemish Brabant, East and West Flanders, and Limbourg.

^bSurvey respondents living in Brussels, Hinault, Liege, Luxembourg, Namur and Walloon Brabant.

^cPercentage of respondents who somewhat or strongly approve a movement.

Source: Eurobarometer 17. Total number of persons surveyed was 1,210. The difference between the total and the cases reported is due to missing values.

involvement or the size and relevance of aggregate social movement sectors. The same problem appears when citizens are asked whether they are members or could see themselves join a social movement organization, although this question is much more concretely focused on dispositions to act than noncommittal statements of preference.⁵

Nevertheless, table 2-1 shows that in 1982, at a peak of the new social movement mobilization beginning in the late 1960s, Flemish respondents were much more likely to report that they (might) join a social movement organization than Walloons (section 2 of table 2-1). In contrast, no such differences appear in pure statements of sympathy with movements (section 1 of table 2-1). Here it even appears that Walloons are more willing to support the new social movements. It is likely, however, that questions concerning the willingness to join social movements provide a more realistic insight into the potential for left-libertarian protest in both regions.

Thus, we interpret table 2-1 as one possible indicator of social movement mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia at the height of a longer wave of protest activity, topping out in the peace movement of the early 1980s. The level of movement mobilization in the early 1980s is espe-

cially important for our comparison of the Flemish and Walloon ecology parties because over two thirds of the party activists interviewed in 1985 joined the parties in that period. If left-libertarian social mobilization indeed translates into intraparty group structures, Flanders' greater mobilization should be reflected by a greater share of ideologues and lobbyists in Agalev, whereas Ecolo should be dominated more by pragmatists.

By 1986, however, willingness to join social movements had tapered off in both Flanders and Wallonia, as a later Eurobarometer survey demonstrates. In both areas willingness to join is now lower, but Flanders has fallen more steeply and, with respect to some movements, shows a lower potential to join than Wallonia. This demobilization, however, cannot yet be reflected in our survey. It should surface in an increasing moderation of Agalev in the late 1980s which remains to be studied.

Although the Eurobarometer surveys provide some tentative evidence for our general argument, they remain an unsatisfactory operationalization of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization. A better measure than postmaterialist attitudes or the general willingness to join social movements is the size and frequency of protest events in Flanders and Wallonia. As students of social movements know, however, a rigorous measurement of protest events is a difficult undertaking, fraught with its own methodological pitfalls and requiring very large efforts to collect appropriate data.⁶ Within the limits of our research project we have fallen back on a softer, more or less qualitative description of left-libertarian movement mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia that is based on three sources: (a) the available literature on Belgian protest movements since World War II, (b) one systematic study of protest behavior in the two regions (Smits 1984), and (c) forty-eight in-depth semistructured interviews with Agalev and Ecolo militants in which they were also invited to comment on the scope and mobilization of left-libertarian movements in Flanders and Wallonia.⁷ Based on these resources, we conclude that left-libertarian cleavage mobilization is considerably higher in Flanders than in Wallonia.

The economic and cultural setting, together with the existing institutional opportunity structure, triggered left-libertarian movements in Belgium. Initially, left-libertarian demands were intimately linked to the ethnolinguistic conflict, as is evidenced by the Belgian student movement of 1968 which combined demands for a democratization and decentralization of society with the struggle for the separation of the University of Leuven into a Flemish and a Walloon campus. Many New

Left sympathizers initially felt attracted to the communitarian parties in Flanders, Brussels, and particularly in Wallonia, until they realized that these parties' agenda for social change was destined to remain limited to linguistic questions. Other New Left militants founded Maoist or Trotskyist parties and some even joined the Belgian communist party which still had a few strongholds in Wallonia. Later in the 1970s, and particularly in Flanders, a number of left-libertarian movements emerged. It is in this period that the left-libertarian cleavage became more mobilized in Flanders than in Wallonia.

Belgian left-libertarian movements were primarily concerned with four topics. First, many industrial and transportation projects became the target of demonstrations and environmental action groups. In Flanders these struggles focused on the building of canals, roads, and chemical factories (cf. Peeters and Vermeiren 1980). In Wallonia they crystallized around the damming of a river and protests against the expanding tourist industry in the Ardennes. Second, neighborhood movements in the big cities, particularly Brussels, became involved in urban planning and the residential quality of life. Third, and again primarily in Flanders, a Third World movement gained a large following. This movement found its outlet less in protest events than in educational efforts to increase citizens' awareness of the plight of less developed countries and in a network of Third World stores selling goods from countries which do not receive much Western aid for political reasons. Fourth, pacifist and anti-NATO protests such as the demonstration in 1973 in which more than 10,000 participants protested against the purchase of American F-16 fighters by the Belgian armed forces, contributed to the internationalist concerns of the libertarian left and prepared the ground for the broad peace movement of the 1980s in which several hundred thousand people demonstrated against the stationing of new nuclear warheads on European soil. Also the peace movement received more support in Flanders. Overall, then, at least the first, third, and fourth strands of activism have been more prominent in Flanders than in Wallonia.

Two left-libertarian movements that have gained a wide following in other countries never left a deep impact in Belgium: the opposition to nuclear power plants and the feminist movement. Belgium started the construction of multiple reactor units at two sites early in the 1970s before nuclear power had moved into the center of the ecological conflict. Since no new nuclear power plant sites were chosen later in the 1970s, the antinuclear power movement never had many targets. Its weakness may explain why Belgian left-libertarian movements did not

develop the density of and linkage among left-libertarian movement organizations typical of countries such as the Netherlands or West Germany.

Also feminism gained no wide support in Belgium. The strong Catholicism of large segments in Belgian society constituted an obvious barrier to demands for the cultural liberation of women from traditional sex roles. Belgium has remained one of the few countries with very restrictive rules on abortion. On the one hand, women's concerns with equality were co-opted by existing parties and pillar associations. For example, the Catholic women's organization has more than 300,000 members, their socialist counterpart about 700,000. On the other, the more radical feminist cultural movements were marginal and rarely tried to influence the political agenda.

The different levels of left-libertarian mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia come into sharper relief in a quantitative study of Belgian protest events between 1953 and 1974 which is based on police records (Smits 1984). The author detects a shift in the stakes of protest away from the traditional cleavages in Belgian politics (class, religion, and language) toward what we have called left-libertarian issues. Particularly Flanders shows an increase in the frequency of demonstrations in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The author links this trend to the gradual secularization and weakening of the Catholic sociopolitical pillar. Similarly, in a survey of Belgian political participation, de Graeve-Lismont (1975: 519) finds that Walloons accord less importance to protest events than efforts to work through established channels of political participation, while Flemings put more emphasis on protest. Flemings are also more optimistic about the chances that protest tactics will stop national legislation (*ibid.*: 520).

While these studies are certainly not conclusive, they provide some systematic evidence for the hypothesis that Flanders has experienced a higher mobilization of the left-libertarian cleavage than Wallonia. The incidence of protest events is our most important indicator to distinguish levels of cleavage mobilization. As we have seen, more indirect indicators provide less clear evidence for our hypothesis. Levels of affluence and industrial growth in the Belgian regions point toward a potential for greater left-libertarian mobilization in Flanders than in Wallonia. The evidence is more mixed, however, with respect to attitudes that may be related to left-libertarianism, such as secularization, postmaterialism, or the self-reported willingness to join left-libertarian movements, although this last measure tends to confirm our argument. Given the gap between attitudes and actions, however, we are confident that protest involvement

in Wallonia and Flanders is the more valid measure of left-libertarian mobilization.

The Emergence of Agalev and Ecolo

The different importance of left-libertarian politics in Flanders and Wallonia is reflected in the development of the ecology parties Agalev and Ecolo. Both parties went through an early “incubation period” from the mid-1970s to about 1979, elaborated a party structure and strategy in the ensuing three years, and finally started institutionalizing their internal decisionmaking process and their external strategies after gaining parliamentary representation in November 1981. But while Agalev has intensified the communication with its social movement constituencies, Ecolo encounters really very few groups to which it can address itself.

The party Agalev grew out of the Belgian Catholic revival movement *Anders Gaan Leven* (“Live differently”) founded by the charismatic Jesuit and teacher Luc Versteyleen.⁸ Originally, this movement rallied people around a life-style of “voluntary simplicity” and a rejection of values associated with industrial society, such as competition, status, and power. But starting in 1973, Versteyleen involved his followers in a number of environmental protests, the most famous of which opposed the creation of a canal near Antwerp to link the Maas and Schelde rivers. Here as well as elsewhere, Versteyleen and his group employed a theatrical, colorful, happening-like protest style they copied from the Dutch left-libertarian movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

In the same vein Versteyleen treated the support of individual electoral candidates running on the lists of conventional parties in 1974 and then from 1977 onward the fielding of a new party list of candidates in national elections as another form of aesthetic, happening-like protest. The acronym Agalev for *Anders Gaan Leven* itself symbolizes the initial playful character of this movement; it was meant to be a parody of “meaningful” party names and was expected to leave people confused as to whether it was an organization of Turkish immigrant workers or Russian dissidents (Agalev 1981: 7).

But with Agalev’s first modest success in the 1978 parliamentary elections (0.7 percent of the vote in the province of Antwerp), the temporary “work group” Agalev soon began to develop a life of its own no longer controlled by Versteyleen. Before the European elections of 1979 in which Agalev received 2.3 percent of the vote in Flanders and 3.6 percent in Antwerp, new activists joined in who had experience in political organizing and sensed that Agalev represented something new

and potentially attractive in Belgian political life. The electoral success increased the momentum of the group and led to an inevitable conflict with Versteyleen. What started out as playful action now turned into a serious party with activists thinking about programs, strategies, and tactics. These new activists considered Versteyleen's charismatic leadership style increasingly incompatible with the demands of a party geared to a participatory, egalitarian reform of democratic decisionmaking. Versteyleen, in turn, deplored Agalev's turn toward a more instrumental understanding of politics as a loss of mission and spirit.

Agalev's crucial turning point came in the fall of 1981 when the collapse of the Belgian government precipitated early parliamentary elections in which Agalev received 3.8 percent of the vote in Flanders and 2 out of 212 seats in the Belgian Chamber of Deputies. The few activists in Agalev which was still officially nothing but a "work group" were overwhelmed by this electoral success and felt it was imperative to build a party organization, strategy, and program immediately. On the one hand, this process eventually led to Versteyleen's withdrawal from the party. With him many of the original supporters of the revival movement *Anders Gaan Leven* turned their back on the party. On the other, over time the party began to gain new friends. Social movement organizations in Flanders originally were highly suspicious of Versteyleen and his efforts to launch a party, but the Flemish movement sector was too dispersed to generate an alternative political representation that could displace the "outsider" group Agalev by a party closer to the mainstream of Flemish left-libertarian movements (cf. Jacobs and Roebroek 1983: 48–49). With Agalev's electoral success, however, new militants joined the party and the relationship between left-libertarian movements and the party improved.

The party organization Agalev set up in 1981–82 is shaped by the conditions of the Belgian electoral system. At the level of the community or borough the party establishes local groups. Local group members belong to an administrative region (arrondissement) and convene to elect an executive secretary and engage in common political actions. Since arrondissements are also electoral districts in parliamentary elections, the most important task of regional party assemblies is nominating the list of candidates for parliamentary office.

At the national level the highest organ of the party is the national conference to which all members are invited. Upon recommendation by the arrondissements the conference elects two representatives from each arrondissement to a national steering committee. The conference also chooses a national party executive.⁹ The steering committee meets

regularly, supervises the executive, appoints commissions, and hires the party employees. All party meetings are public. Tenure in national party office is restricted to two consecutive two-year terms. In elected office the informal rule is that a deputy or local councillor can be reelected once.

Since 1981 the party's history is characterized by steady electoral improvement. Most notably, it gained an average of 5.7 percent of the vote in the 1982 communal elections and 6.1 percent in the parliamentary elections of October 1985 and 7.3 percent in 1987. The party lacks organized factions or wings and has experienced a fairly steady turnover of activists among its executive and elected offices. In its programs it supports environmental protection, limitations on industrial growth, a redistribution of wealth toward the less affluent, and a culturally more open, participatory society.¹⁰

In Wallonia Ecolo's roots lead back to the Francophone party *Rassemblement Wallon* (RW).¹¹ In 1972 RW lost those activists who disliked a "single issue party." The latter founded a new protoparty building on a broader political agenda advocating federalism, participatory democracy, and economic equalization in a new protoparty. In 1975 this core group of activists began to include the ecological issue in its agenda and founded a Belgian section of *Friends of the Earth*. Modeled on the French *Amis de la terre*, who are much more an organization of "political ecologists" than an American-style single issue pressure group of environmentalists, the Belgian section soon became active in elections by fielding temporary electoral lists, yet without organizing a permanent political network between elections. In January 1978 an assembly of environmentalists founded Ecolo and soon passed a political program. In the ensuing national, local, and European elections Ecolo gained increasing support and finally reached 6 percent of the Walloon vote in the parliamentary elections of 1981, entitling it to two seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Similar to Agalev's experience, Ecolo's formative period from 1978 to 1981 was characterized by struggles between personalities representing different political philosophies. Whereas a group from Brussels advocated an extremely loose party association, its opponents in the Namur party section eventually prevailed and established a more structured, federalist organization. When both groups competed against each other in the Brussels district in the 1978 and 1981 parliamentary elections, Ecolo led by the Namur group won out.

Ecolo's formal party structure is very similar to Agalev's so that we can confine ourselves to the few differences worth mentioning. Ecolo's

steering committee has always been directly elected by the regional assemblies. Its party executive is elected by the national party conferences. Whereas Agalev has its headquarters in Brussels, Ecolo's national party organization resides in Namur, a direct consequence of the party struggles of 1979 through 1981. Otherwise, Ecolo's formal charter tries to guarantee participatory openness and transparency of the decisionmaking process just as much as Agalev's statutes.

Although Ecolo's electoral performance in 1981 was better than Agalev's and Ecolo remained ahead of Agalev in the 1982 local election and the 1984 European election, in the decisive parliamentary election of 1985 Ecolo gained few votes beyond its 1981 result (6.2 percent, up 0.2 percent from 1981). This precipitated a crisis in the party. In the struggle between a small leftist faction primarily rooted in the Brussels party section and the old leadership based in Namur and Liege, the latter prevailed again. The conflict was triggered by the efforts of the Ecolo leaders to negotiate a limited agreement with the Catholic-liberal regional government in Walloon. This government held exactly 50 percent of the seats in the regional parliament and needed support of other parties on a case-by-case basis. Having lost the fight against strategic moderation, many radical militants of the Brussels section as well as one deputy of the party's parliamentary group left Ecolo and formed a leftist alternative. In the 1987 national election Ecolo slightly improved its electoral support to 6.5 percent but fell behind Agalev (7.3 percent in Flanders).

Electoral Support of the Flemish and Walloon Ecology Parties

If levels of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization differ between Flanders and Wallonia, these patterns may also be reflected in the regional distribution of Agalev's and Ecolo's electoral support. In areas with higher cleavage mobilization, ecology parties should be more successful than elsewhere. Of course, this hypothesis is difficult to test because a host of factors other than cleavage mobilization, such as the competitive position of parties, may influence voting behavior. For this reason we should not interpret voting outcomes as strong evidence for or against the hypothesis that cleavage mobilization differs between Flanders and Wallonia.

At least for the 1981 and 1985 elections, in which Ecolo outperformed Agalev, our proposition does not hold true that stronger cleavage mobilization should translate into greater voter support. Yet we must take into

account that Ecolo started building its party organization about two years earlier than Agalev, which managed to run a campaign and field candidates in all Flemish electoral districts only in 1987. By then, however, Agalev's electoral support was clearly stronger than Ecolo's (7.3 to 6.5 percent). Thus our hypothesis tends to be confirmed by the 1987 national election in which the support of both parties can be compared best. Moreover, while Agalev has seen a steady increase of support (from 3.8 percent in 1981), Ecolo's support has more or less stagnated since 1981 (moving from 6.0 to 6.5 percent).

Examining smaller electoral units, our main hypothesis is also confirmed. In the more affluent urban areas where left-libertarian movements tend to find more support ecology parties also attract relatively more voters. In Flanders Agalev has its best results in the affluent Antwerp region, where the party received 10 percent of the vote in the arrondissement or in the city of Mechelen where the party was backed by 7.9 percent of the voters. Agalev also does well in the university town of Leuven (arrondissement: 8.2 percent; city: 10.4 percent), in Brugge (city: 8.7 percent), and in Ghent (city: 7.2 percent). In most other electoral districts, and particularly in the rural areas of East Flanders and Limburg, Agalev receives less than its national average.¹²

Ecolo surpasses Agalev's average electoral return only in two districts, the arrondissements Nivelles (7.5 percent), in the vicinity of Brussels, and Namur (8.1 percent), seat of the party and a university town. In the predominantly Francophone Brussels Agalev and Ecolo together receive more than Ecolo's national average (6.7 percent), but fall short of the support typical in Agalev strongholds. Here the factional struggles in Ecolo may have hurt the party. Nowhere except in Nivelles and Namur does Ecolo receive more than 7 percent of the vote. Both the rural areas as well as the old steel and coal basins (Charleroi, Liege) give Ecolo less support than its regional average of 6.5 percent.

To rule out that our interpretation of geographic patterns of voter support commits an ecological fallacy, we must show that, at the individual level, Agalev and Ecolo voters come precisely from those strata which are amenable to left-libertarian appeals and which tend to be concentrated in urban areas primarily relying on service sector employment, rather than in the old industrial towns or rural districts. As we will show in chapter 5, where we compare the demographic characteristics of the Belgian ecology party militants and voters, Agalev and Ecolo draw upon a demographically similar electorate: predominantly young, well-educated individuals with average or below-average incomes and little religious attachment. Women tend to be overrepresented at least

among Ecolo's voters.¹³ Ideologically, Belgian ecology party voters place themselves between the center and the center-left and tend to be more postmaterialist than the average population.¹⁴

Left-Libertarian Cleavage Mobilization in Belgian Politics

We have now gathered several indicators for our argument that the level of left-libertarian mobilization is higher in Flanders than in Wallonia. First, the Flemish economic environment is more favorable to left-libertarian demands than that of Wallonia. Second, Flanders developed a stronger left-libertarian movement sector in the 1970s and early 1980s, encompassing environmental, Third World, pacifist, and urban neighborhood movements. Third, the history of Agalev and Ecolo shows that the linkage between left-libertarian movements and ecology parties has been stronger in Flanders than in Wallonia. Finally, the parties' patterns of electoral support are by and large consistent with regional differences in left-libertarian cleavage mobilization, although we have cautioned against making too much of this finding.

Based on what we now know about the differences in the environment of Flemish and Walloon ecology parties, we can derive the following four hypotheses from the theoretical framework developed in chapter 1. Hypotheses 1 and 2 concern individual level traits of the activists in each party. Hypotheses 3 and 4 concern consequences of Agalev's and Ecolo's different internal composition for the organizational structure and process in both parties.

Hypothesis 1: In Agalev more activists are recruited from the left-libertarian social movements and radical subcultures than in Ecolo. Agalev, therefore, has a greater share of activists who are ideologues or lobbyists.

Hypothesis 2: In Agalev a greater percentage of activists supports radical issue and strategic positions and is less content with the democratic openness of the party organization than in Ecolo. Moreover, these radical ideologues are more likely to participate in national party affairs than the more moderate pragmatists.

Hypothesis 3: Because the proportion of ideologues and lobbyists is higher and that of pragmatists lower in Agalev than in Ecolo, Agalev will be overall a less hierarchical and more participatory party. Thus, ideas count in the design of party structures.

Hypothesis 4: Because of the different internal composition of the

parties, they have also different patterns of elite recruitment. In Agalev party executives tend to be more radical than the rank and file, while elected representatives reflect a cross-section of the membership. In Ecolo pragmatists control most important political offices.

We are now ready to turn to our empirical analysis.

3 Ideologues, Lobbyists, and Pragmatists in Ecological Politics

Activists in a party share some common objectives but may disagree on many questions of party ideology, strategy, organization, and clientelistic representation. The distinction between “pragmatists” and “ideologues” clearly relates more to ideological and organizational disagreements than clientelism. Our additional category of “lobbyists,” however, is designed to tap clientelistic divisions and special interest lobbies in political parties. In this chapter we will identify ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists in Agalev and Ecolo with several indicators. Our discussion will cast some light on the general intellectual thrust of left-libertarian parties as well as their internal group structure.

It is impossible to define our types of ideologues, lobbyists, and

pragmatists with a single unidimensional measure. They relate to the importance of party democracy, the radicalism of political programs, and the concern with special interests compared to more encompassing perspectives on social change. The activists' organizational, programmatic, and clientelistic concerns may be related to each other but not in a very tight and straightforward pattern. We will first discuss the three variables we employ in the definition of each type of party activists: organizational discontent with intraparty opportunities for participation, ideological self-placement, and commitment to social movement organizations. We will then outline the formation of the three intraparty groups and also examine differences between Agalev and Ecolo that relate to the levels of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia. It should be kept in mind, of course, that operationalizations of theoretical concepts, such as the ideal types of party activists, are always provisional. They are designed in light of the specific parties studied, depend on the research instruments employed, and do not fully capture the theoretical term they are meant to measure.¹

The Demand for Organizational Democracy

Radicals in most political parties in competitive democratic systems have been found to put great emphasis on internal party democracy. This desire may be especially strong in left-libertarian parties that attack the existing conventional socialist, liberal, or Christian-conservative parties as lifeless, oligarchical bureaucracies. Thus, when asked about the significance of internal democracy for ecology parties, Agalev and Ecolo militants unanimously approve of participatory decisionmaking as an important objective. Subtle probing into the nature and extent of commitment to party democracy, however, yields a more nuanced picture. We asked Agalev and Ecolo militants to determine one by one whether six organs of decisionmaking in their parties had too little or too much power (table 3-1). These evaluations measure the relative distance between what militants perceive to be the *factual* power of a party organ and what they deem to be the *desirable* amount of power for that organ or group of functionaries. The responses, however, do not reflect the *absolute* level of power attributed by the militants.² Inspection of table 3-1 shows that the six party organs fall into two groups. First, there are organs of elite decisionmaking (party executives, secretariats, parliamentarians) that militants tend to see as too powerful. Second, there are organs of mass participation (steering groups, party conferences, regional assemblies) that militants would like to see strengthened. Over-

Table 3-1 Organizational Discontent and Participatory Demand in Ecology Parties (in percentages)

	Party organs have			
	Too much power ^a	Just about enough power	Too little power ^a	
Organs of elite decisionmaking				
Party executives	46	48	6	100
Party secretariats	38	58	5	100 ^b
Parliamentarians	18	70	12	100
Organs of mass participation				
Steering committees	13	52	35	100
Party conferences	4	57	39	100
Regional assemblies	1	30	69	100

^aCategories collapse two values in the original questionnaire.

^bRounding error.

all, however, the relative level of satisfaction with the power distribution in the parties is high.

To summarize the information contained in the militants' responses in a single term, we have created a measure of organizational discontent. Positive values are assigned in each instance where a militant believes an organ of mass participation has "too little" (= +1) or "way too little" (= +2) power and an organ of elite decisionmaking has "too much" (= +1) or "way too much" (= +2) power. Thus, positive values indicate radical discontent with party democracy. Negative values are assigned for each organ of mass participation a militant believes to be too powerful and each organ of elite control she/he would like to see strengthened. For each militant we can now sum up the values she/he assigns to each party organ. A value close to the zero point (-2 to +2) reflects great contentment with the party's power structure. Negative values represent militants who believe that the party elites need to be strengthened. Positive values indicate "radical" discontent with the opportunity for rank-and-file influence (table 3-2).

Seventy percent of the Ecolo militants and 49 percent of the Agalev activists are generally content with the functioning of party democracy and think that the various party organs have about the right amount of power. Nobody seriously calls for a strengthening of the party elites. There is, however, a substantial group of activists who believe in at least

Table 3-2 The Index of Organizational Discontent (in percentages)

		Index of organizational discontent	
		Agalev	Ecolo
Content with party democracy	-3 - -1	4	4
	0	14	24
	+1 - +2	31	42
	+3 - +4	23	16
	+5 - +6	18	12
Discontent with party democracy	+6 - +12	11	2
		101	100
Number of respondents		<i>N</i> = 120	<i>N</i> = 50
No response (percentage of sample)		26	47
		<i>N</i> = 162	<i>N</i> = 94

three instances that organs of mass participation have too little or organs of elite authority have too much power. In Agalev these militants constitute a slight majority (52 percent); in Ecolo they represent almost one-third (30 percent) of all militants.

The variance of opinions on organizational discontent *within* each party, in any case, can only be due to differences in attitudes and dispositions, because militants are asked to evaluate the same reality. In contrast, the variance *between* the two parties may reflect either that Agalev militants have, on the average, a higher demand for mass participation than Ecolo militants and are therefore less content or that Agalev has a more elite-controlled power structure to which militants react more critically. We will examine this alternative in chapter 7, but our discussion should already indicate the basic finding that the difference is by and large grounded in militants' perceptions and attitudes rather than in the parties' actual power structures. If anything, Agalev is the more participatory of the two parties. The fact that Agalev militants have still greater demand for organizational democracy is consistent with our expectations based on the left-libertarian cleavage mobilization in Flanders. Since it is higher than in Wallonia, it is likely that Agalev attracts more radical left-libertarian activists.

The evaluation of individual party organs, as well as the summary index of organizational discontent, yields a large number of missing responses with troublesome consequences for multivariate data analy-

Table 3-3 Organizational Discontent and Perception of Elite Control as an Obstacle to Party Democracy (in percentages)

	Elite control				Total
	Major obstacle	Moderate obstacle	Minor obstacle	No response	
Organizational discontent with party democracy					
No response	5	12	53	30	100 (<i>N</i> = 86)
Little discontent (−2 – +2)	2	18	64	16	100 (<i>N</i> = 95)
Much discontent (+3 – +12)	13	29	52	5	99 ^a (<i>N</i> = 75)
<i>r</i> = +.39 (<i>p</i> < .001)					

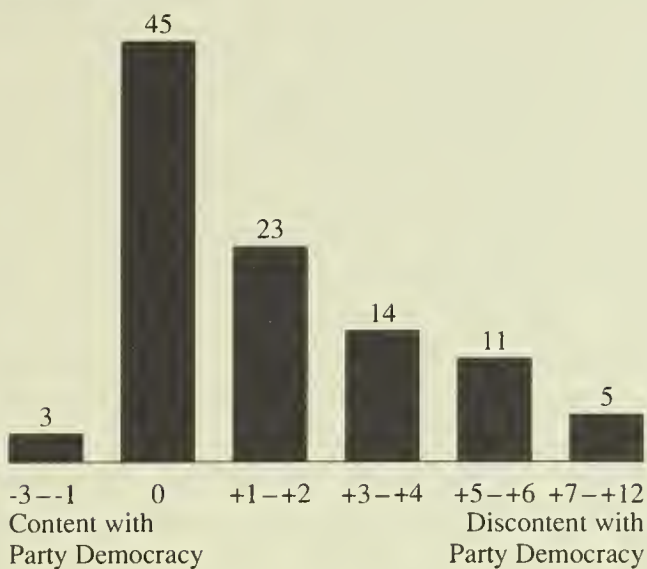
^aRounding error.

sis. Even more important, the missing cases are not randomly distributed but are themselves indicative of militants’ attitudes toward their party organization, as we will try to prove.

Ecolo militants express not only more moderate opinions than Agalev militants but are also more likely to refuse evaluation of the party organs altogether (see table 3-2: Ecolo has 48 percent missing cases compared to Agalev’s 25 percent). In-depth semistructured interviews with party militants, moreover, revealed that people sensing a great deal of organizational loyalty and contentment were most reluctant to rate party organs on the items constituting the index of organizational discontent. This circumstantial evidence suggests that nonrespondents are predominantly content with party democracy.

Our interpretation of missing responses can be further validated by cross-checking the militants’ answers to organizational discontent with those to another item relating to organizational democracy that will be analyzed in greater detail in chapter 7. Militants were asked to rate the importance of the party elites as an obstacle to party democracy (questions 47.2 and 47.5, see Appendix II). Summing up values for these assessments and cross-tabling them with the index of organizational discontent reveals that militants who think elite control impedes party democracy are also more likely to be organizationally discontent (table

Figure 3-1 Adjusted Index of Organizational Discontent
(All Agalev and Ecolo Militants)
(in percentages)



3-3: $r = +.39$; $p < .001$; $N = 151$). For the time being, however, we are most interested in those activists who refused to respond to our index of organizational discontent. Can we extrapolate their perceptions of party democracy from their evaluation of elite control?

Indeed, it is clear from table 3-3 that those activists whose values on the index of organizational discontent are missing also tend not to believe that elite control is a serious problem. They rate elite control in almost exactly the same way as the organizationally contented. Further, the percentage of militants who refuse to evaluate elite control increases in a linear fashion from the organizationally discontented via the organizationally contented to those who refused answers to the index of organizational discontent. All these observations suggest that the militants most content with party democracy did not respond to the index of organizational discontent. For this reason we created an “adjusted” index of organizational discontent in which those militants who refused to evaluate party democracy are counted as organizationally contented (figure 3-1).

Party Ideology and Group Representation

With respect to political ideology and orientation toward special party clienteles, ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists are distinguished by two interacting variables, ideological radicalism and ideological scope.

Activists can call either for moderate, incremental reforms or for radical, synoptic social transformation. These alternatives may be geared either to a narrow scope of policy areas and social institutions or to a broad scope, affecting the basic structure of society. Ideologues express a belief in radical social transformation affecting a broad scope of social institutions. They want to deliver collective benefits to society at large and reason that a pursuit of selective benefits satisfying particular pressure groups promotes a reformist outlook which undermines the commitment to radical social transformation. Pragmatists, in contrast, endorse moderate, incremental social change but see it as a vehicle of broad reform. For them the provision of selective benefits to specific clienteles is politically worthwhile only if it contributes to broader collective objectives of incremental reform. Lobbyists differ from both ideologues and pragmatists. They focus on selective goods and provisions for special clienteles as the primary objective of politics and treat ideology and strategy opportunistically as matters subordinated to the pursuit of selective goods. In contrast to ideologues and pragmatists, they have a narrow ideological scope and act as representatives of pressure groups. Depending on the circumstances, they waver between more radical or moderate views of party strategy and ideology.

To define our three groups of activists, we should measure ideological radicalism and ideological scope. As an indicator of ideological radicalism, we have chosen the militants' self-placement on the left-right (L-R) scale. Numerous studies have shown that "right" and "left" are meaningful political categories which enable us to relate the citizens' L-R self-placements not only to their party identifications in a political system but also to their positions on a wide range of policy issues. L-R self-placements tend to be most tightly linked to party sympathies and policy preferences among individuals with high levels of education and high political involvement. Since Agalev and Ecolo militants belong precisely to this group of people (see chapter 5), L-R self-placements should be especially powerful indicators of political ideology and party identification.³ For this reason we have selected L-R self-placements as our key indicator of political orientation and ideological disagreement in ecology parties. In chapter 4 we will analyze the *meaning* of "left" and "right" among ecology party activists more closely and show how it relates to policy positions and party sympathies.

Agalev and Ecolo militants place themselves firmly on the political left (table 3-4). Fifty-four percent of all activists say they are either on the "far left" or the "left." Most of the others place themselves in the center or on the center left. Only a tiny minority is located further to the

Table 3-4 Agalev and Ecolo Activists' Self-Placement on the Left-Right Scale (in percentages)

	Agalev	Ecolo	Adjusted self-placement (both parties)
Far left	6	9	6
Left	48	46	38
Center left	36	35	28.5
Center	8	8	26
Center right	1	1	1
Right	1	—	0.5
Far right	—	—	—
Total	100	99 ^a	100
Number of responses	139	65	256
Refusals to respond	23	29	n.a.

^aRounding error.

right. Overall 80 percent (204 activists) responded to the survey question while 20 percent refused to place themselves. The high response ratio is somewhat surprising because, in the questionnaire, shortly before militants reached the L-R self-placement scale, 56 percent by and large agreed with the statement “the Greens are neither left nor right.” Nevertheless, the L-R distinction still had sufficient meaning for them to answer the self-placement question. In general the responses to the L-R scale confirm our belief that ecology parties belong to a libertarian *left*.

As is the case with organizational discontent, nonresponses are not randomly distributed among activists, but are systematically linked to their ideologies. In-depth interviews clearly showed that most of those militants who did not respond to the L-R scale had previously indicated that the Greens are neither right nor left. Cross-tabling the L-R self-placement scale and the L-R relevance statement yields more sophisticated insights into the nature of nonresponses (table 3-5). Among those who answer both items, the further militants are on the left, the less likely they are to agree that the Greens are beyond left and right ($r = -.42$; $p < .001$; $N = 196$). Moreover, those who refuse self-placement look much more like centrist than leftists when we examine their answers to the L-R relevance statement. One cannot help but conclude that nonresponses to the L-R scale imply centrist self-placements.

This conclusion is further corroborated when we cross-table militants'

Table 3-5 L-R Self-Placements and Evaluations of the Salience Left and Right Have for Ecological Politics (in percentages)

	Salience of right and left for ecological politics			No response	
	Low ^a	Medium	High ^a		
Self-placements on the L-R scale					
(Far) left ^a	28	16	54	3	101 ^b (<i>N</i> = 112)
Center (left)	67	17	12	4	100 (<i>N</i> = 92)
No response ^a	85	4	—	12	101 ^b (<i>N</i> = 52)
<i>r</i> = −.42 (<i>p</i> < .001)					

^aCategories collapse two values in the original questionnaire.

^bRounding error.

L-R self-placement and their sympathy ratings for Belgian parties. Although we have the militants' sympathy ratings for all parties, our general argument can be highlighted first by examining sympathies toward a single party, the far left Trotskyists (table 3-6). Among those who respond to both items, sympathy with Trotskyism and (far) left self-placement are quite closely linked (*r* = +.32; *p* < .001; *N* = 138). Those who do not place themselves on the L-R scale find the Trotskyists as unsympathetic as those who tend to the center of the scale. Finally, no group is as highly unsympathetic to the Trotskyists or refuses even to

Table 3-6 L-R Self-Placements and Sympathies toward Trotskyist Parties (in percentages)

	Sympathy of the Trotskyist party			No response	
	High ^a	Medium	Low ^a		
Self-placements on the L-R scale					
(Far) left ^a	29	49	14	8	100 (<i>N</i> = 112)
Center (left)	9	42	30	18	99 ^b (<i>N</i> = 92)
No response ^a	13	31	27	29	100 (<i>N</i> = 52)
<i>r</i> = +.32 (<i>p</i> < .001)					

^aCategories collapse several values in the original questionnaire.

^bRounding error.

Table 3-7 Agalev and Ecolo Militants' Sympathies for Other Belgian Parties (scale ranging from 1 = strong sympathy to 7 = strong antipathy)

	All militants	Self-placement on the L-R scale	
		Refused	Agreed
Socialists	3.99 (239)	4.34 (41)	3.91 (198)
Maoists	4.45 (223)	4.51 (41)	4.41 (182)
Communists	4.47 (236)	4.63 (43)	4.21 (193)
Trotskyists	4.67 (218)	4.94 (41)	4.60 (177)
Linguistic parties	4.60 (234)	4.82 (41)	4.55 (193)
Christian democrats	5.90 (231)	5.91 (44)	5.88 (187)
Liberals	6.24 (230)	6.22 (44)	6.25 (186)

rate the Trotskyists as those who do not respond to the L-R self-placement scale (54 percent giving lowest sympathy ratings or refusing to answer compared to 48 percent for centrists and 22 percent for leftists).⁴ Those who do not place themselves on the L-R scale are not only more hostile to the Trotskyists than those who declare their position, but to all other parties of the left and even the Belgian linguistic parties as well (table 3-7). Both groups of Agalev and Ecolo militants, however, share in common a strong rejection of the liberals and Christian democrats who were in a government coalition at the time when our questionnaire was circulated.

We conclude, therefore, that nonresponses to the L-R scale should be recoded as “centrist” responses in an *adjusted R-L scale* we provide in column 3 of table 3-4. Overall, then, 44 percent of the militants place themselves on the (far) left, while 56 percent tend toward the center (left). Again, there are interesting differences between Agalev and Ecolo consistent with our theoretical framework. Although the distribution of those who place themselves on the L-R scale is about the same in both parties, Ecolo has a much higher share of nonrespondents. Since these nonrespondents tend toward the center, Ecolo’s ideological distribution is generally less radical than Agalev’s. This observation is consistent with our proposition that in an area with more left-libertarian social mobilization ecology parties should recruit more radicals.

Based on our index of organizational discontent and L-R self-placement, we can now reasonably identify ideologues and pragmatists in Agalev and Ecolo. We define ideologues as those individuals who

have a radical ideological conception placing themselves on the (far) left and are highly discontent with party democracy (with index values of +3 or greater). Conversely, pragmatists are those who are both organizationally content (with values of +2 to -2) and place themselves in the center left or further to the right. Ideologues and pragmatists thus have “consistent” belief systems covering a clearly defined linkage between organizational and ideological interpretations of politics. Militants with consistent belief systems follow a generalized pattern to structure their views of the political world. For this reason they are also likely to see politics as a struggle to provide collective goods rather than the provision of selective goods to narrowly defined clienteles.

Our questionnaire poses greater difficulties in generating an adequate measure of lobbyists. For empirical purposes we could now simply define the “lobbyists” as the residual group of militants with “inconsistent” and “particularistic” beliefs: they are either on the (far) left but organizationally content, or they are inclined toward the center but demand much more party democracy. This solution would be all the more convenient, since our questionnaire did not contain any direct operational question that would lead us to determine the scope of the militants’ ideology. It is preferable, however, to define lobbyists by a positive criterion, which is linked to the theoretical concept we try to measure, rather than treat the group as a residual. We have, therefore, searched for an indirect, second-best measure to single out lobbyists from the remaining pool of party activists.

Militants with narrow clientelistic orientations are likely to be very involved in issue-specific pressure groups and social organizations outside the party that directly relate to their clientelistic concerns. In our survey we asked militants to list the organizations belonging to the environmental, the feminist, the Third World, and the workers’ social movements and a variety of others in which they are active members. To measure the intensity of their involvement we also asked them to indicate whether they hold a formal function in these organizations. We have then constructed an index giving each organizational membership one point and adding two points for each formal office held in a voluntary political association (table 3-8).

Most activists have some affiliation with social movement organizations, but the range and intensity of these affiliations vary widely. Those who count as lobbyists should show involvement in social movement organizations above the median or an index value of at least five. Lobbyists are then all those activists with *inconsistent* organizational and ideological beliefs who *also* participate in social movement organi-

Table 3-8 Militants' Affiliation with Social Movement Organizations at the Time the Survey Was Conducted (index values) (in percentages)

		Agalev	Ecolo	All
Low involvement in social movement organizations	0-1	22	34	26
	2-4	24	36	28
	5-7	27	12	22
High involvement in social movement organizations	8-10	14	7	11
	11+	14	11	13
		<i>N</i> = 161	<i>N</i> = 94	<i>N</i> = 255

zations more than the median of the party activists. More militants in Agalev score above the median value than in Ecolo, yet another sign of the differences between the two parties. Nevertheless, we realize that our operationalization of lobbyists is only marginally satisfactory. Our questionnaire did not include a direct and independent measure of ideological scope.⁵

Ideologues, Lobbyists, and Pragmatists Defined

We are now ready to identify the three groups of activists empirically and estimate their relative size in Agalev and Ecolo (table 3-9). Ideologues are all those organizationally discontented activists (index value of $\geq +3$) who at the same time place themselves on the (far) left. There are 39 ideologues (15 percent of the sample) among the 253 respondents. Pragmatists are organizationally content and at the same time choose a moderate ideology placing themselves on the center left, the center, or even the center right. Pragmatists represent 39 percent of the entire sample and are, with 99 members, the largest group. Lobbyists are activists with “inconsistent” organizational and ideological beliefs who at the same time show extraordinary activism in social movement organizations (SMO index ≥ 5). Lobbyists account for 22 percent of the entire sample or 56 individuals. Finally, there is a group of 59 activists (or 23 percent of the sample) who are neither very involved in social movements nor express clear-cut ideological beliefs whom we classify as a residual group.

We have seen that Agalev militants are, on the average, organizationally more radical, more oriented to the left, and more active in social movement organizations than their colleagues in Ecolo. Consequently,

Table 3-9 Ideologues, Lobbyists, and Pragmatists in Agalev and Ecolo^a

	L-R self-placement: (far) left		L-R self-placement: center (left)	
	Affiliation with social movement organizations		Affiliation with social movement organizations	
	High	Low	High	Low
Organizational discontent with party democracy				
High (+3-+12)	Ideologues: 39 (15%) Agalev: 32 (20%) Ecolo: 7 (8%)		Lobbyists II: 21 (8%) 22 (9%) Agalev: 18 (11%) Agalev: 14 (9%) Ecolo: 3 (3%) Ecolo: 8 (8%)	
Low (-2-+2)	Lobbyists I: 37 (14%) 35 (14%) Agalev: 17 (10%) Agalev: 26 (16%) Ecolo: 20 (22%) Ecolo: 9 (10%)		Pragmatists: 99 (39%) Agalev: 54 (34%) Ecolo: 45 (49%)	

^aPercentages give relative size of a subgroup to that of the entire sample ($N = 256$), Agalev militants only ($N = 162$) or Ecolo militants only ($N = 94$).

when comparing the two parties, there are relatively and absolutely more ideologues in Agalev (20 percent) than in Ecolo (8 percent). The same discrepancy appears among lobbyists (Agalev: 27 percent; Ecolo: 13 percent). Pragmatists, in turn, constitute the strongest group in Ecolo (49 percent; Agalev: 34 percent). Also the unclassified residual group, most of whom are probably closer to being pragmatists than ideologues or lobbyists, is larger in Ecolo (31 percent; Agalev: 19 percent). All this suggests that lines of conflict are drawn sharper in Agalev than in Ecolo. On the whole, Agalev incorporates a wider spectrum of political opinions and expectations than Ecolo.

Our preliminary findings already yield an interesting insight into the parties' potential power structure. In Ecolo pragmatists have such strong support that they are likely to control the party organization. They alone represent almost half of the militants and, together with the residual group, four out of five militants. A coalition of lobbyists and ideologues remains in a hopeless minority position. In Agalev, however, lobbyists

and pragmatists are almost equally strong, and the ideologues command a respectable level of support. The weights are distributed in such a way that coalitions of lobbyists and ideologues or of lobbyists and pragmatists could govern the organization. If going alone, the pragmatists needed almost the full support of the residual category of activists to win a slim majority. Thus, overall, the power game in Agalev appears to be more open and pluralist than in Ecolo where one tendency of opinions clearly dominates the party.

The differences between Agalev and Ecolo clearly fit into the theoretical framework we have suggested in chapter 1. Where the social cleavage represented by a party on the field of electoral competition is more highly mobilized, relatively more ideologues and lobbyists will join the party. It is precisely this dynamic we observe in the comparison of the two Belgian ecology parties. The lower mobilization of left-libertarian movements in Wallonia makes itself felt in a clear hegemony of pragmatists in Ecolo. However, Agalev in Flanders, where left-libertarian movements are more prominent, attracts a more diverse group of activists.

Party theorists often propose that especially young parties express an ideological orientation (Robertson 1976: 101–4). Yet even in Agalev ideologues represent only a fifth of the activists. We should keep in mind that in Belgium, on the whole, the left-libertarian cleavage is less mobilized than in other Northern European countries, such as Denmark, the Netherlands, or West Germany. In these countries we would find a much greater influence of ideologues on left-libertarian parties than in Belgium.⁶ The maturation of parties may be one element determining pragmatism, but the (de)mobilization of social cleavages is certainly another important force.

Conclusion

A typology of party activists is useful only if it helps us to structure a wealth of data and predict patterns of political behavior and beliefs logically unrelated to the concepts that define the three types. In the following chapters we will therefore explore whether the subgroups of activists we have identified now shed light on the policy positions and career paths of ecology party militants and on Agalev's and Ecolo's structure of participation, power distribution, and strategy in the competitive struggle with rival parties. Of course, we should always keep in mind that our empirical operationalization of subgroups in left-libertarian parties only approximates theoretical constructs. As a conse-

quence, the fit between data and theory may not be as neat as we would wish.

As we have seen, our efforts to define the three types of activists with theoretically relevant empirical indicators generate a large number of missing cases. We have already provided substantial evidence to justify the recoding of missing cases in our indices of organizational discontent and L-R self-placement. Nevertheless, in subsequent chapters we have made all computations of bivariate and multivariate linkages between types of activists, or the variables that were employed to define them, and other aspects of the activists' behavior and orientation both with the "original" indices, revealing missing cases, as well as the "adjusted" ones recoding missing cases. In both methods of calculation the number of ideologues remains the same, but the number of lobbyists and pragmatists is substantially smaller where missing cases are not recoded.⁷ In most instances we found that parameter values measuring the strength of association between variables remain very similar, regardless whether original or adjusted indices and groups were employed. Levels of significance are naturally less satisfactory when missing cases reduce the number of usable cases substantially. We will report correlations and regressions with original, unadjusted variables and groups, however, only if use of the "adjusted" indices produce parameter estimates that diverge substantially from parameters derived from equivalent computations employing the "original" variables.

4 Activists' Policy Preferences and Party Strategy

In competitive democratic systems political parties choose programs and strategies to attract votes, win office, and affect public policy. In this chapter we will analyze the party militants' views on these questions in detail with three general objectives in mind. First, we are interested in the general policy and strategic outlook that constitutes the central tendency of opinions in Agalev and Ecolo. In the introduction to this study we have claimed that Agalev and Ecolo belong to a broad cohort of left-libertarian parties in Western Europe. So far we have submitted only limited evidence to substantiate this proposition. From chapter 3 we know that most militants locate themselves on the political left or center-left and have more sympathies to conventional parties of the left than the right. We must now go further and identify leftist and libertarian elements in the militants' view of the parties'

programs. Libertarian ideas call for more individual autonomy, tolerance for diverse life-styles, decentralized self-organization of communities, and hence strict limits on concentrated bureaucratic power and control. Libertarians are skeptical about the possibility of consensually shared ultimate values and try to diffuse social conflict by guaranteeing the viability of a plurality of forms of social organization and individual conduct in society.

We will then examine the extent to which libertarian ideas affect the meaning of leftism in ecology parties. Without knowing the ideological context, it is difficult to give precise meaning to the attribute “left” that most militants employ to characterize themselves. Semantically, the notion has less denotative content than the concept of libertarianism. Literally speaking, “left” and “right” refer merely to spatial locations that are defined by relations among individuals, not by an absolute system of ideological coordinates. In politics it is often unclear whether left and right are merely symbolic identifiers of political friend/foe relations or whether actors associate definitive political programs and party positions with the understanding and use of these concepts. We will therefore explore whether L-R self-placements in ecology parties have a meaning that can be associated with policy programs and strategic views.

Our final dimension of militants’ beliefs concerns their views on party strategy. To simplify matters to some extent strategic choice and programmatic preferences constitute a means/ends relationship. What are the strategic means that are likely to further the realization of given programmatic ends? Means and ends are interdependent, yet the consideration of political strategies presupposes a considerable amount of empirical information about what is *feasible* in a given political situation, while debates about programmatic ends more likely confine themselves to what is *desirable* from a given ideological point of view. As a consequence, it is perfectly possible that programmatic “radicals” nevertheless endorse “moderate” party strategies because they understand that chances of realizing their goals are limited. Nevertheless, in politics the relationship between means and ends is sufficiently fluid and interactive to expect some empirical affinities between the ecology party activists’ programmatic and strategic positions.

Based on our mapping of programmatic and strategic views among Belgian ecology party militants, our second task is to explore the differences in viewpoints between Agalev and Ecolo. We will seek to link such differences to the levels of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia. We expect that the Flemish militants generally

express more radical views than their Walloon colleagues. Identifying a general correlation between political environment and the central tendency of political views in Agalev and Ecolo, however, does not yet provide a satisfactory explanation of the parties' stances because it lacks microfoundations. What are the processes and mechanisms that bring about these aggregate differences between the parties? Our third task, then, is to answer this question by accounting for interparty policy and strategic differences in terms of the three subgroups of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists we have identified in the preceding chapter. If our analysis of intraparty subgroups is a useful approach to study the dynamic of party politics, it should help us to predict the programmatic and strategic views of Agalev and Ecolo militants. Ideologues should articulate the ideas of the libertarian left more sharply than either lobbyists or pragmatists. Moreover, ideologues are likely to call for radical uncompromising electoral strategies which do not sacrifice policy positions in order to gain marginal voters or join government coalitions with other parties. Pragmatists, conversely, will advocate moderate policies and strategies. Lobbyists will be positioned between both groups, but may express some distinctly radical demands in policy areas of greatest concern to themselves. Agalev's overall more radical policies and strategies, then, are a consequence of the relatively greater weight of ideologues and lobbyists in the organization.

Ideological Radicalism

The political beliefs of citizens are usually complex and multidimensional. They cannot be captured entirely by a single survey item, such as self-placement on an L-R scale, or even a short battery of questions. For this reason our study of the policy positions endorsed by Agalev and Ecolo militants is more exploratory than definitive. Nevertheless, we will analyze the militants' views on a number of policy issues in order to identify some underlying principles that organize the political discourse in ecology parties into coherent patterns and systems of belief.

We define an ideological belief system with Converse (1964: 207) as "a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence." The notions of "constraint" and "functional interdependence" suggest that, if an activist supports a certain position on one issue, we can predict with some probability what her preferences are on other issues. In a highly constrained ideological system we need to know only very few issue positions in order to predict a wide range of associated beliefs.

If the system is less constrained and more pluralistic, beliefs are only weakly associated with each other. In statistical terms constraint can be identified by the magnitude of correlations among attitudes and the amount of the variance on issue positions that the most powerful factors explain in a factor analysis of political beliefs.

The literature on political belief systems has a distinctively normative tinge. Converse (1964: 227–34) found that the constraint among idea elements in mass publics is generally quite weak when compared to that of political elites. Moreover, the stability of belief elements over time is surprisingly low (*ibid.*: 238–45). He concluded from these observations that most people lack a capacity for rational political deliberation and are unable to draw logically and theoretically consistent inferences from their beliefs. Converse's assessment, however, implies a value judgment because no scholar can claim an objective understanding of what constitutes a rational, coherent belief system (Lane 1973: 98–100). Could not one argue that belief systems with low constraint are more reasonable because they reflect the pluralist, multifaceted nature of conflicting values and orientations in modern society much better than a doctrinarian, highly constrained, deductive ideology?¹ Despite the confusion about normative and analytical judgments that is revealed by the literature on ideological constraint, the concept remains useful because it allows us to compare the extent of linkages between different elements of political ideology among ecology party activists.²

In our survey among Agalev and Ecolo militants we were interested not only in the central tendencies of their beliefs, but also in disagreements and conflicts among subgroups of activists. For this reason we have asked militants to evaluate issues and propositions that are known to prompt diverging assessments within ecology parties. This selection of policy items may bias our study in favor of finding loosely constrained belief systems, but it is imperative to engage in a meaningful analysis of subgroups and tendencies within ecology parties.

A set of issue statements that definitely fails to generate diverse assessments in ecology parties is the postmaterialism scale employed in Eurobarometer surveys (table 4-1). Agalev and Ecolo militants attribute greatest importance to "postmaterialist" issues, such as citizens' participation and free speech, and attribute low significance to fighting inflation and maintaining law and order. Eighty-six percent of our respondents are postmaterialists, who rank participation and free speech as their top priorities, 1 percent (2 respondents) are materialists emphasizing inflation and law and order, and 13 percent take mixed positions. The responses are almost perfectly transitive: activists attribute greater

Table 4-1 Postmaterialism in Agalev and Ecolo

	First priority	Second priority	Third priority	Last priority	
Citizens' participation in government	79	19	2	1	101 ^a (<i>N</i> = 239)
Guarantee freedom of expression	18	71	10	1	100 (<i>N</i> = 239)
Fight inflation	3	9	79	8	101 ^a (<i>N</i> = 237)
Maintain law and order	1	1	9	89	100 (<i>N</i> = 234)

^aRounding error.

salience to participation than free speech, presumably because they take the latter more for granted than the former, and both are preferred to fighting inflation and maintaining law and order. Our findings confirm that supporters of left-libertarian parties are mostly postmaterialists. In fact, Agalev and Ecolo party activists are more likely to be postmaterialists than their voters.³

Our finding that Belgian ecology party militants are mostly postmaterialists is consistent with Inglehart's (1977) theory of value change in advanced industrial democracies but does not provide strong evidence for its underlying causal argument. Given that we have no time series data, we cannot determine whether the militants' postmaterialism is due to generational, period, or life cycle effects. Moreover, closer analysis shows that the notion of postmaterialism in some respects is both too wide and too narrow to characterize left-libertarians sufficiently. It is too wide because not all postmaterialists are sympathetic to ecology parties or to the policy positions they stand for. In a number of empirical studies Flanagan (1987) has identified groups of postmaterialists that are ideologically far removed from the left-libertarian agenda. Hence our concept of left-libertarian politics defines a more tightly circumscribed set of attitudes and dispositions than Inglehart's notion of postmaterialism. At the same time, however, the concept of postmaterialism is also too narrow to capture left-libertarian beliefs. We will argue below that the internal discourse of left-libertarian politics is systematically linked to dimensions that have little to do with the phenomenon of postmaterialism, even though postmaterialism is an important element of the activists' overall ideological visions.⁴

In order to shed more light on the ideas of Agalev and Ecolo activists than can be achieved with the postmaterialism scale and to identify the

Table 4-2 A Survey of the Activists' Policy Positions

	(Mostly) ^a approve	Partially approve	(Mostly) ^a disapprove	
1. In order to protect nature and transform the economy in an ecological sense, state intervention in many areas is necessary.	80	16	4	(<i>N</i> = 242)
2. A drastic reduction of work time is necessary, even if this implies salary reductions.	78	13	9	(<i>N</i> = 247)
3. Belgium should leave NATO.	75	14	11	(<i>N</i> = 248)
4. The multiplication of department stores must be pushed back to the benefit of small merchants and producers.	75	19	6	(<i>N</i> = 239)
5. The communitarian problems have no importance when we consider which other problems (unemployment, environment, peace . . .) must still be solved in Belgium.	69	14	17	(<i>N</i> = 241)
6. An eventual increase of the gasoline tax should not prevent low-income people from driving.	64	24	12	(<i>N</i> = 235)
7. In the enterprises the employees, local residents, and consumers, and not the owners, should have the power to decide.	64	29	7	(<i>N</i> = 242)
8. It is necessary that the women are free to decide whether they want abortions or not.	66	15	19	(<i>N</i> = 248)
9. The large electricity companies must be nationalized.	66	17	17	(<i>N</i> = 245)

Table 4-2 Continued

	(Mostly) ^a approve	Partially approve	(Mostly) ^a disapprove	
10. Ecological standards to which industry must comply should not go so far as to drive a good part of industry out of Belgium.	14	27	59	(<i>N</i> = 237)
11. Europe should take a neutral position in the struggle between the superpowers.	62	10	28	(<i>N</i> = 239)
12. The Greens are neither on the left nor on the right.	56	15	29	(<i>N</i> = 244)
13. The extension of space for individual freedom is more important for me than a strengthening of bonds of neighborliness.	31	40	29	(<i>N</i> = 227)

^aTwo values collapsed into one.

internal debates in ecology parties, we had to search for policy statements that were likely to generate divergence among the party activists. In choosing these issues we followed two lines of reasoning. First, we selected policies that are intrinsically controversial in ecology parties, such as abortion policy, the nationalization of private businesses, or Belgium’s NATO membership and European neutralism. Second, we constructed items that force militants to make “hard choices” between two values both of which ecologists are likely to endorse when they are not pitted against each other. For instance, militants support the egalitarian demand for a right to employment but also favor tough environmental regulation of industry. How do they react when faced with a choice between employment and ecological protection? To give another example, most militants would endorse a reduction of the workweek to twenty-eight to thirty-two hours. But how do they evaluate shorter hours if they are accompanied by pay cuts? Here a “postmaterialist” concern with personal autonomy and freedom from drudgery is directly pitted against a “materialist” and distributive concern with economic living standards and income equality.

After examining and pretesting a considerable range of statements, we eventually settled for the list of thirteen items presented in table 4-2.

We have organized these propositions beginning with the least controversial items and moving down to the most divisive statements. A brief glance at the table shows that our efforts to generate variance among militants' beliefs are blessed with only mixed success. There is a strong central tendency in most of the activists' responses.

Several statements forced militants to evaluate trade-offs between economic growth and distributive equality, on the one hand, and demands for environmental protection and personal autonomy, on the other. In two instances they prefer the noneconomic benefits over material growth and distributive concerns. In the case of work time (item 2) militants clearly endorse shorter hours, even if this policy leads to pay cuts and thus violates the objective of most European unions to use work-time reductions as a method to redistribute resources between capital and labor. With respect to the trade-off between industry and ecological protection (item 10), a majority ranks ecological concerns ahead of industry and economic growth, but a significant minority is either undecided or opposed to this choice. In item 6 (gas tax), where the trade-off between environmental protection and equality is least clearly formulated, a majority of militants endorses distributive over nonincome concerns with resource conservation. Overall, these responses suggest that postmaterialist demands for collective goods have greater salience than demands for economic growth. Whether distributive concerns are also subordinated to noneconomic values is more difficult to determine based on these three questions.

Four other propositions in the survey deal with property rights and institutions of economic governance: market, state, or decentralized, noncompetitive production. In all instances large majorities of militants express views decidedly unsympathetic to the free play of market forces. Party activists call for state intervention in the regulation of the environment (item 1) and the nationalization of electric utilities (item 9), although there is some significant internal opposition to this second demand. They also intend to supplant entrepreneurial authority by an industrial democracy of workers and consumers (item 7). Finally, they believe that small business must be supported against the competitive forces of capitalism (item 4). Thus, ecologists prefer both state regulation or decentralized, perhaps communitarian control of economic activity through small businesses to corporate capitalism. In terms of economic governance ecologists are closer to socialist and anarchist positions than market liberalism.

Two statements on our list concern foreign policy (items 3 and 11). Most activists would like Belgium to leave NATO, but a much smaller

majority would welcome a neutral European position between the superpowers. We suspect that the notion of neutralism carries negative connotations of passivity or indifference vis-à-vis the big questions of world order and thus was received less enthusiastically than an exit from NATO.

Two questions are designed to tap cultural divisions between more collectivist views, which are traditionally associated with Catholicism and socialism, and more liberal-individualist outlooks. Two thirds of all respondents support women's rights to choose abortion (item 8). Yet there is no clear majority among militants on the relative importance of individualism or communal solidarity (item 13).

One issue taps the ethnolinguistic cleavage in Belgium (item 5). More than two thirds of the activists believe that the conflict between Flemings and Walloons is less relevant than ecological, peace, and economic questions. The low salience Agalev and Ecolo attribute to the language question is consistent with their political practice. They are the only parties in Belgian parliament with a joint caucus bridging communitarian barriers.

Finally, we asked the activists to evaluate the salience of the left-right division for Green politics (item 12), an item we already examined briefly in chapter 3. The majority response that right and left are irrelevant for ecological politics is surprising not only in light of the militants' L-R self-placements but also given their support for state intervention and economic redistribution, which are clearly policy positions associated with the traditional left.

Overall, table 4-2 shows that Agalev and Ecolo militants indeed tend to be left in the traditional sense of supporting nonmarket regimes of economic resource allocation. But they do not share the conventional left's fascination with economic production. When they are faced with a direct conflict between economic demands (growth, distribution to a certain extent) and postmaterialist concerns for collective goods (items 2, 6, and 10), militants tend to favor the latter. This may also explain why they believe the Green political discourse is no longer "right" or "left" (item 12). Militants thus primarily emphasize the noneconomic quality of life in contemporary democracies, yet endorse anticapitalist institutional reforms. Our data suggest that it may not be warranted to consider postmaterialism as a clear-cut alternative to economic radicalism, at least in the sense of a critique of capitalist institutions of economic governance.

In addition to being postmaterialist and anticapitalist, ecology party activists are also libertarian, as their advocacy of women's choice on abortion (item 8) and the low significance they attribute to the commu-

nitarian conflict suggest (item 5). Nevertheless, neighborliness (item 13) has considerable attraction as a vision of social solidarity in a decentralized society, although a plurality of militants is unwilling to commit itself to a supremacy of the individual or of the collective. A “libertarian” view of society is not purely individualist but endorses voluntary associations and mutual aid among citizens. Emphasis on individualism, in contrast, is more likely an attribute of a classical market-oriented liberalism.

The general distribution of opinions on the issues fully justifies calling Agalev and Ecolo left-libertarian parties. In many ways ecology party activists constitute a “second left” (Sainteny 1987: 28) which blends anticapitalist with ecological, postmaterialist, and libertarian demands. The marketplace should not be the central institution of economic governance, yet militants are more inclined to support decentralized, communitarian institutions with direct democratic participation than traditional statist and collectivist socialism. Moreover, they put less emphasis on redistributive concerns that have figured so prominently on the conventional socialist policy agenda.

Despite these central tendencies, Agalev and Ecolo have significant internal ideological disagreements, as well as differences between each other, as table 4-3 demonstrates. Within each party foreign policy questions generate the most disunity, particularly the issue of neutralism. Also the importance of the right-left vocabulary is highly controversial. Several other strong internal disagreements appear in only one of the two parties, such as the abortion issue in Agalev or the weight of the ethnolinguistic cleavage, the question of utility nationalization, and the distributive impact of higher gas prices in Ecolo.

Between the two parties issues of economic governance and distribution are especially divisive (items 1, 4, 6, and 9). Agalev supports the more anticapitalist positions. Where statements directly concern the trade-off between postmaterialist demands for ecological protection or time sovereignty and distributive issues, however, no differences between the parties occur (items 2 and 10). Both parties also endorse industrial democracy (item 7). We will discuss below how the relevance of the right-left discourse (item 12) fits into this picture. In any case Agalev militants are slightly more inclined to attribute importance to the right-left language.

In the noneconomic realm Agalev is oriented toward more collectivist positions than Ecolo (items 8 and 13), yet sees less importance in the ethnolinguistic cleavage (item 5). Interestingly, Ecolo is more in favor of leaving NATO, but less supportive of neutralism between the super-

Table 4-3 Differences in the Policy Positions of Agalev and Ecolo Activists (Low acceptance = 1; High acceptance = 5)

	Agalev		Ecolo		Pearson r's
	Mean value	Standard deviation	Mean value	Standard deviation	
1. Ecological improvement through state intervention	4.42	.81	3.74	.98	−.35***
2. Shorter work hours with pay cut	4.05	1.04	4.23	.99	+.08
3. Belgium should leave NATO	3.95	1.19	4.26	1.00	+.13*
4. Protection of small business	4.17	.96	3.87	.91	−.15*
5. Linguistic question unimportant	4.13	1.06	3.40	1.35	−.29***
6. Higher gas tax should not hurt the poor	4.09	1.03	3.45	1.14	−.28***
7. Industrial democracy	3.88	.91	3.74	.98	−.07
8. Women decide on abortions	3.50	1.30	4.34	.99	+.32***
9. Nationalize utilities	4.09	1.01	3.34	1.22	−.32***
10. Ecology above industry ^a	3.72	1.06	3.55	1.02	+.08
11. Neutral Europe	3.76	1.43	3.30	1.53	−.15*
12. Greens neither left nor right	3.33	1.43	3.80	1.32	+.16**
13. Individual above community	2.86	1.06	3.36	1.04	+.22***

^aOriginal statement reversed.

*p ≤ .05 **p ≤ .01 ***p ≤ .001

powers than Agalev. Is Ecolo calling for a “French strategy” of building a strong European military alliance replacing NATO’s defense shield? Agalev appears to subscribe more to a demilitarization of the European continent, as it is envisioned by other northern European left-libertarian parties.

Some of the differences between Agalev and Ecolo can easily be explained in terms of the parties’ origin and initial clientele. In Agalev the Catholic milieu still makes it more difficult to agree on an abortion policy. Ecolo’s origins in the Francophone parties and Wallonia’s eco-

conomic decline keep the ethnolinguistic issue alive. Other differences, especially as far as issues of economic governance are concerned, may be related to the different strength of the subgroups of which Agalev and Ecolo are composed. Below we will explore the hypothesis that ideologies are more radically oriented toward social change in a number of respects than other activists. As a consequence, Agalev has a more anticapitalist outlook than Ecolo.

Before we address these questions, we will simplify our investigation through a factor analysis designed to draw out common dimensions in the militants' assessments of the thirteen policy issues (table 4-4). Three factors emerge from this operation which explain 38.5 percent of the variance.⁵ Compared to other studies of party activists, the explanatory value of these three factors, and thus the "ideological constraint" among party activists, is relatively modest.⁶ This suggests that below a general anticapitalist, libertarian, and postmaterialist commitment issue cleavages are not very polarized in the two parties.

Factor I explains 16 percent of the variance among militants' policy positions and clearly concerns a capitalist/anticapitalist economic issue dimension. Militants who tend to endorse industrial democracy are also inclined to support measures for nationalizing utilities, protecting the poor from gas price hikes, subsidizing small businesses, and leaving NATO, and to consider ethnolinguistic matters comparatively irrelevant. They are also more open to state intervention and tend to support a collectivist ethic.

The economic factor, however, does not simply identify a traditional conflict between socialism and capitalism inside the ecology parties. Distributive issues that are commonly associated with the class conflict load weakly or not at all on factor I, such as work time with pay cuts. However, factor I also includes variables, such as support for ecology over industry and for small business, that are hardly compatible with a traditional socialist program. Anticapitalist positions are not primarily driven by concerns with income (re)distribution but with growth and the structure of power and governance in the economy. The most radical militants express an ecological, antigrowth, and decentralist-libertarian anticapitalism which evidences a new *politicization of the relations of production* that is symptomatic for left-libertarian politics in many Western countries (Kitschelt, 1985a). Even those militants who share an aversion to the mechanisms of market allocation with conventional socialism combine this view with unsocialist libertarian and ecological demands for a new economic order that has its intellectual forefathers more in anarchism and syndicalism than Marxian socialism.

Table 4-4 Factor Analysis of Policy Positions (Principal Components)^a

	Factor I: (Anti-)capitalist governance of the economy dimension	Factor II: Modernity vs. postmodern deep ecology dimension	Factor III: Agalev/ Ecolo difference
1. Industrial democracy	+ .61	—	—
2. Higher gas tax should not hurt the poor	+ .53	—	—
3. Nationalize utilities	+ .65	+ .29	—
4. Linguistic questions unim- portant	+ .48	— .33	—
5. Protection of small business	+ .36	— .45	—
6. Belgium should leave NATO	+ .38	+ .40	— .40
7. Shorter work hours with pay cut	+ .39	— .35	—
8. Individual above community	— .23	+ .40	+ .42
9. Greens neither left nor right	—	— .54	— .25
10. Ecological improvement through state intervention	+ .33	—	+ .54
11. Ecology above industry	+ .29	—	+ .42
12. Women decide on abortions	—	+ .58	— .43
13. Neutral Europe	—	—	+ .34
Explained variance	16.0%	11.7%	10.8%
Eigenvalue	2.08	1.52	1.40

^aOnly factor scores $\geq .20$ shown.

Factor II explains 11.7 percent of the variance and lends itself to a fairly clear interpretation. It divides militants endorsing a modern, complex society with a high emphasis on individualism from “post-modern” concerns with a new decentralist, solidary social order. In the political discourse this latter position is often labeled “deep ecology” (Devall and Sessions, 1984). Supporters of modern, complex societies believe that efficient markets and, to a limited extent, central state regulation are necessary instruments to govern society. In this sense they refuse to subsidize small business or to impose shorter workweeks with pay cuts. Even the slightly favorable dispositions of liberals toward the nationalization of utilities is compatible with this belief system: because

utilities are monopoly enterprises operating outside a free market, a liberal may justify tight regulation or nationalization. Further, modernists give priority to the realization of personal freedom over communitarian needs and endorse women's choice on abortion, an individualist position. Moreover, among all militants they have dissociated themselves least from the Belgian ethnolinguistic cleavage, which is mostly concerned with difficult institutional questions of economic modernization. Interestingly, modern individualists are also inclined to uphold the salience of the L-R vocabulary in ecological politics, an issue to which we will return when we analyze the relationship between L-R self-placements and policy positions more closely.

Postmodern deep ecologists, in contrast, value social solidarity over individualism. The combination of collective solidarity with support for small business may signal a sympathy for decentralized, cooperative enterprise. They believe that the "old" social cleavages (ethnicity, right/left conflicts) have been left behind by the existential choices ecological politics forces upon us. Deep ecologists value life and abhor human intervention in nature. For this reason they oppose abortions. They value material frugality and thus welcome shorter work hours, even if this means a pay cut. They also distance themselves from the conventional modern left by opposing the nationalization of enterprise or Belgium's exit from NATO. In fact, postmodern deep ecologists are strongly inclined to argue that left and right are no longer meaningful in the new ecological discourse.

Factor II does not clearly divide economic from noneconomic issues. Moreover, factor II crosscuts the libertarian/authoritarian dimension that sets ecologists apart from other political viewpoints. Both modern and postmodern positions combine elements of libertarian and nonlibertarian beliefs. Nevertheless, factor II does place economic questions in the context of broader cultural choices and suggests a logic of reasoning about the meaning of life, individualism, material gratification and social solidarity. It contrasts an individualist commitment to cultural modernity, social conflict, and change with an antimodern or postmodern desire to establish stable, decentralized, ecologically sound, and economically frugal collectives. To borrow from Habermas' (1982) terminology, while modernists affirm the growing differentiation of complex subsystems of instrumental action, such as markets and states, postmodernists wish to displace systemic differentiation of society in at least some spheres and strengthen communitarian institutions.

Since we employ the highly controversial contrast between modernity and postmodernity to characterize one dimension of political conflict in

ecology parties, a few thoughts on our understanding of these concepts are warranted. Philosophy, literary criticism, aesthetic theory, and the social sciences have used these concepts in a wide range of meanings, and there is little hope that a common terminology will be reached.⁷ Nevertheless, it may be worthwhile to distinguish two complementary senses that play a role when postmodern institutions and modes of thinking are characterized. On the one hand, postmodernity is identified with a pluralization of political discourses, a fragmentation of subjectivity, and the end of epistemological “grand narratives” that provide overarching frameworks for the interpretation of the social world. In this sense the multidimensionality of the beliefs expressed by ecology party activists in general gives testimony to the importance of the postmodern phenomenon. Whereas anarchist, liberal, or socialist grand narratives tend to analyze society from the vantage point of a single coherent set of concepts and wish to privilege a single mode of social organization in their utopias of the good society (the primary group, the market, the state), left-libertarian ecologists subscribe to a multidimensional vision of social transformation. The utopia of postmodernists does not call for a new unity and coherence of society but endorses tolerance for plurality (Welsch 1988: 183–84).

On the other hand, postmodernity may also be linked to a more specific conception of social transformation within a plurality of institutional forms. In modern social theorizing plurality primarily appears as the horizontal and vertical differentiation of society into structured, semiautonomous subsystems—such as the economy, the polity, the family, science, and culture—each endowed with a distinct and unlimited internal logic of development and growth. The postmodern sense of plurality rebels against this tightly “patterned” plurality of modern society. It advocates a looser plurality of social forms that undermines the boundaries between subsystems, disrupts their internal logic of growth, and thus de-differentiates society (Lash 1988). In this respect deep ecologists who value a new particularism of community, language, self-restraint, frugality, and rejection of the grand narratives connected with the notions of left and right are representatives of an emerging postmodern sensibility that is divisive within left-libertarian parties themselves, as is demonstrated also by the second dimension in our factor analysis of the militants’ policy positions.

In contrast to (anti-)capitalism (factor I) and (post-)modernity (factor II), factor III, accounting for 10.8 percent of the variance, is less easily interpreted. Yet, with one minor inconsistency we can say that it represents idiosyncratic issue differences between Agalev and Ecolo that are

related to the specific historical and cultural settings in which each party developed.⁸ Agalev militants are indeed more statist, more neutralist, less in favor of abortions, less willing to exit from NATO, more sympathetic to the continued relevance of right and left, and are more inclined to rank ecological concerns ahead of industry. What does not quite fit into this interpretation is the link to individualism, since Agalev militants on average are more collectivist than their Ecolo compatriots. In any case Factor III taps idiosyncratic ideological patterns that must be understood in terms of the unique history of each Belgian ecology party and their regional cultural contexts. Because these patterns are not central for our argument, we will neglect Factor III in our further analysis.

Table 4-2 shows that, on the average, ecology party activists share in many, but not all of the conventional left's anticapitalist economic positions. Moreover, the factor analysis demonstrates that questions of economic governance are also the most important ideological divider *within* ecology parties. Although our investigation confirms Inglehart's proposition that noneconomic postmaterialism is a centerpiece of the political ideology to which supporters of left-libertarian political parties subscribe (cf. Inglehart 1984, 1987a, and 1987b), it would be premature to predict that conflicts about economic governance are disappearing. Ecologists are clearly anticapitalist when compared to the prevailing issue opinions of mass publics in Western societies. In addition, conflicts about the governance of the economy have considerable salience in shaping policy divisions within ecology parties themselves. Beyond questions of economic governance, however, the cultural and social tension between postmodern deep ecology and modern individualism constitutes a second important dimension of intraparty disagreement which crosscuts traditional economic debates but is also incongruous to the materialism/postmaterialism divide.

Our factor analysis illustrates how ecological politics shifts the universe of the political discourse away from a pure concern with questions of economic governance toward a multidimensional understanding of political alternatives. We will explore next whether this configuration of political ideas also affects the ways Agalev and Ecolo militants use the notions of left and right and locate themselves on the L-R scale. The meaning of left and right itself undergoes a pluralization. Both anti-capitalism and postmodern deep ecologism are associated with a new understanding of the left/right division.

In survey studies of mass publics L-R self-placements are usually associated with economic issue positions but to a fairly low extent. Inglehart

Table 4-5 Ideological Correlates of L-R Self-Placements and of the Salience of Left and Right for Ecological Politics

	B	Beta
A. L-R Self-placements (being on the left)		
Anticapitalism	+ .18	+ .24**
Postmodern deep ecology	+ .30	+ .39***
Adjusted R^2 : .21*** ($N = 254$)		
B. Salience of left and right for ecological politics		
Anticapitalism	+ .06	+ .04
Postmodern deep ecology	− .58	− .42***
Leftist self-placement	+ .56	+ .31***
Adjusted R^2 : .37*** ($N = 242$)		

(*) $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

and Klingemann (1976: 259) found correlations between a general left/right policy factor and L-R self-placements explaining in the neighborhood of between 1 and 10 percent of the variance ($r = .10 - .35$). Among individuals with high cognitive mobilization (education), however, as well as those with strong party identification, ideological constraint was significantly greater, yielding correlations explaining as much as 20 to 40 percent of the variance (ibid. 262–63). Given that Agalev and Ecolo militants are well-educated and highly involved in politics, we should expect a strong association between L-R self-placements and policy positions. But which policy positions? If the view is correct that “left” and “right” assume a plurality of meanings, L-R self-placements should be as much associated with the “deep ecology” factor as with the “economic governance” factor. This expectation, in fact, is confirmed. In both parties leftist self-placements are moderately associated with anticapitalism and more strongly with deep ecology.⁹ Both traditional and new dimensions of the left-right conflict influence the activists’ policy positions and structure intraparty cleavages. If we enter both policy factors in a regression on L-R self-placements, they explain 21 percent of the variance on L-R self-placements for all activists (table 4-5A) or 15 percent in Agalev and 32 percent in Ecolo (table 4-5A). This explanatory yield is in the range Inglehart and Klingemann (1976) report among educated and politically involved citizens in a variety of countries. The big difference between Agalev and Ecolo is due

Table 4-6 Anticapitalism and Postmodernity in Agalev and Ecolo (in percentages)

	Strong	Medium	Weak	Total
A. Anticapitalism ^a				
Agalev	44	34	23	101 ^b (<i>N</i> = 160)
Ecolo	17	30	53	100 (<i>N</i> = 94)
All	34	33	33	100 (<i>N</i> = 254)
B. Postmodern deep ecology ^a				
Agalev	29	32	39	100 (<i>N</i> = 160)
Ecolo	41	34	24	99 ^b (<i>N</i> = 94)
All	34	33	33	100 (<i>N</i> = 254)

^aFactor scores were partitioned into lower, middle, and upper third.

^bRounding error.

to Ecolo's sharper division about postmodern deep ecology concerns, a topic to which we will return momentarily.

Our findings disconfirm the belief widespread among ecology activists themselves that "right" and "left" are meaningless in ecological politics (see table 4-2). The equation given in table 4-5B explains how Agalev and Ecolo militants perceive the *salience* of left and right, as operationalized by item 12 in table 4-2.¹⁰ Anticapitalism contributes very little to the perception of L-R salience. Yet those who place themselves on the left tend to endorse the salience of left and right.¹¹ Most interestingly, postmodern deep ecologists oppose the salience of left and right, *although* factually they are more inclined to place themselves on the left than other militants.

When we examine the distribution of anticapitalism and postmodernism in Agalev and Ecolo, we find an asymmetry which holds the key to understanding why issue positions explain more variance in L-R self-placements in Ecolo. While Agalev militants tend to take more radical positions on anticapitalism, militants in Ecolo are more vigorously in favor of a postmodern deep ecology vision (tables 4-6A and 4-6B). Because the deep ecology divisions has relatively greater salience in Ecolo, a larger percentage of L-R self-placements is accounted for in this party.

If our theory of subgroup formation within political parties is valid, we should also find linkages between anticapitalism, postmodernism,

Table 4-7 Anticapitalism, Deep Ecology: Political Orientation and Practice in the Ecology Parties (Pearson r's)

	Anticapitalism		Postmodern deep ecology	
	Agalev	Ecolo	Agalev	Ecolo
Ideologues	+ .20* (160)	+ .18* (94)	+ .18* (160)	+ .31*** (94)
Lobbyists	+ .14* (160)	+ .02 (94)	+ .14* (160)	− .02 (94)
Pragmatists	− .14* (160)	− .01 (94)	− .34*** (160)	− .38*** (94)

(*) $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

and membership in the group of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists. Indeed, in both parties ideologues are more committed to anticapitalism and deep ecology than pragmatists (table 4-7). Lobbyists take an intermediate position. At least in Agalev, they tilt more toward the ideologues than the pragmatists. The distribution of policy visions in Agalev and Ecolo is thus empirically connected with the internal group structures of the parties. Overall, Agalev is the more radical leftist party because it includes a greater share of ideologues.

To probe one step further into the association between intraparty groups and party ideologies, we have divided the militants into subgroups depending on whether they are above or below the median factor score on the anticapitalism and deep ecology dimensions. The resulting four sectors sharply illuminate the actual political alternatives debated inside ecology movements and political parties in advanced industrial society.¹² We can then explore what unites the activists in each policy sector and separates them from those in other sectors (table 4-8). Which configuration of policies is most likely to be endorsed by ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists? How does adherence to a policy sector relate to L-R self-placement and organizational discontent, the primary variables we have employed in chapter 3 to distinguish pragmatists from ideologues and lobbyists?

First, there is a group of *modern reformists* who place themselves in the political center and are organizationally quite content. They essentially wish to preserve a modified capitalism and its social and cultural correlates. For them ecological questions primarily require a “technological fix,” but no basic institutional change.¹³ Not surprisingly, pragmatists represent the largest contingent of all modern reformists, followed by lobbyists and ideologues.

Table 4-8 The Political Discourse in Ecology Parties (in percentages)

		Opposition to capitalist governance of the economy ^a				
		Strong		Weak		
Social and cultural choices on modern civilization						
Modern liberal individualism	Modern anticapitalists			Modern reformists		
	Leftist self-placement: +.10			Leftist self-placement: −.28***		
	Organizational discontent: −.07			Organizational discontent: +.05		
		Agalev Ecolo		Agalev Ecolo		
		Ideologues	28 —	Ideologues	9 14	
		Lobbyists	27 8	Lobbyists	18 8	
		Pragmatists	50 24	Pragmatists	30 33	
		Of all groups	37 19	Of all groups	21 27	
Postmodern deep ecology	Postmodern anticapitalists			Postmodern reformists		
	Leftist self-placement: +.35***			Leftist self-placement: −.04		
	Organizational discontent: +.15*			Organizational discontent: −.13*		
		Agalev Ecolo		Agalev Ecolo		
		Ideologues	50 57	Ideologues	13 29	
		Lobbyists	34 17	Lobbyists	20 67	
		Pragmatists	7 12	Pragmatists	13 31	
		Of all groups	27 17	Of all groups	15 38	

^aPercentage figures relate to the share of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists belonging to a particular ideological orientation.
(*)p ≤ .10 *p ≤ .05 **p ≤ .01 ***p ≤ .001

Second, there is a group of *postmodern reformists*, who emphasize the need for a profound cultural and social change yet are not inclined to tamper with the fundamental economic institutions of capitalism.¹⁴ These deep ecologists place themselves somewhere on the center-left but do not distinguish themselves from the average self-placement of all activists. They are, however, significantly more content with party

democracy than other militants. In both parties lobbyists are the strongest contingent of postmodern reformists, followed by pragmatists.

Third, there is a group of *modern anticapitalists* who welcome institutional reforms that change property rights and modes of economic governance but wish to preserve the modern liberal-individualist cultural and social attributes of contemporary society. This group has “eco-socialist” visions but places itself only insignificantly further to the left than other activists because the economic governance dimension is no longer the only determinant of left/right self-placements.¹⁵ Given that Agalev militants have generally greater anticapitalist inclinations, it is not surprising that Agalev’s proportion of activists in this category exceeds Ecolo’s by a factor of two. A greater share of pragmatists belongs to the group of modern anticapitalists than that of ideologues. This finding is unexpected but easily explained by the fact that the majority of ideologues belong to the fourth group of postmodern anticapitalists.

The most radical group of left-libertarian ecologists, the *postmodern anticapitalists*, call for both a fundamental economic as well as a social and cultural transformation of contemporary Western society. They place themselves firmly further to the left and are also more organizationally discontent than any group of militants located in other policy sectors. Postmodern anticapitalists thus express the greatest demand for a decentralized, participatory party and society.¹⁶ Ideologues from both Agalev and Ecolo are the most numerous constituency among postmodern anticapitalists. The second strongest contingent is provided by the lobbyists, whereas few pragmatists subscribe to these radical anticapitalist and postmodern beliefs.

Our analysis thus clearly demonstrates that “right” and “left” develop very complex connotations in ecological politics. It is most compatible with an interpretative framework that postulates a pluralization and differentiation of the L-R discourse in modern politics. Overall, it refutes the position that left and right become meaningless. Our investigation also does not match well with the proposition that the meaning of left and right is only expanding, not inherently changing (Greven 1987). Finally, it is only partially consistent with arguments that left and right undergo a gradual change of meaning leading to the eventual disappearance of questions of economic governance (Inglehart 1984, 1987a and b). The ecological “politicization of production” asks some of the same questions about the adequacy of market capitalism that have figured prominently in the socialist debates of the past one hundred and fifty years. In this sense ecology parties represent a “second left”

(Sainteny 1987) that incorporates important elements of the socialist discourse but transforms them in the light of new grievances and challenges to the existing social order.

Strategic Radicalism

A party strategy establishes the relationship between winning votes and political office as a means of political actions, on the one side, and the objectives of officeholding, such as the change of policies and social institutions, on the other. Strategic debates revolve around potential *trade-offs* between vote getting, government office, and programmatic objectives. What is the extent to which parties must sacrifice policy demands in order to gain enough votes and offices to realize policy? Thus, strategic debates involve several cognitive and evaluative operations. Militants must determine the goals or “benefits” their party should realize through strategic action. Simultaneously, they must identify likely avenues to reach these objectives in light of the existing distribution of political resources and institutions in a political system. Further, they must determine the cost of alternative strategies to reach their ultimate objectives.

Thus, party strategy depends on the activists’ policy preferences as well as a sober assessment of the causal link between political resources, effort, and likely outcome. Many of the forces that affect the choice of strategy are beyond the immediate control of the party activists but shape their opportunity structure and feasible strategies. Whether a particular strategy will be successful depends on the distribution and mobilization of public support for conflicting policies, the strategies of competing parties, the rules of the electoral contest, the institutional channels through which a party can gain access to policymaking, and a host of other contingencies. Assessing feasible party strategies is not simply a matter of radical demands and convictions, but of resources, institutions, and power relations in society. Once activists have taken these premises of political action into account, they can calculate the costs and benefits of strategic choices, and especially the potential trade-off between optimizing voter support, government office, or policy impact. For this reason there is no direct and tight link between party militants’ policy views and the strategic options they advocate.

Given the interdependence of means and ends of political action and the uncertainty about the causal link between resources, effort, and outcomes of strategic choice, the selection of a political strategy is not simply a matter of rational optimization with given parameters. Party

militants may count different consequences of strategic action as “costs” and “benefits.” Moreover, their cognitive perception of cause-effect relations is based on subjective probabilities rather than firm empirical knowledge. Assumptions about cause-effect relations of political action are therefore often shaped by the militants’ normative ideas and political frameworks.¹⁷ When goals are ambiguous and the consequences of action are uncertain, the activists’ subjective interpretations play a crucial role in the deliberation of strategies.

Although these complexities make it unlikely that there is a tight link between party militants’ ideological positions and their advocacy of strategies, there should be some correlation between the normative and cognitive premises to which different groups of activists subscribe. “Moderate” strategists usually argue that (1) parties should pursue the goal of changing society incrementally and that (2) such change is feasible because additional voters and allies can be won if the party abandons more far-reaching policy objectives. (3) These voters and allies, in turn, help the party to win government office which is a benefit in itself and increases the party’s ability to influence policy. “Radical” strategists, in contrast, deny at least one and possibly all three of the moderate propositions. They call for a profound transformation of social institutions and/or dispute that new voters or allies can be won through moderate policies and/or doubt that winning government office is an end in itself or leads to worthwhile policy changes.

The multiplicity of cognitive and normative premises that are tied into debates about radical or moderate strategies illustrates that the relationship between programmatic radicalism and strategic radicalism is necessarily complex. Programmatic radicals may propose a moderate strategy if they believe the party can be sufficiently strengthened to exercise some influence over government policy. Conversely, programmatic moderates may support radical strategies because they see no effective avenue to winning additional votes, allies, or control over government policy. Nevertheless, we expect that there remains enough affinity between the three propositions we outlined in the preceding paragraph that ideologues in ecology parties, with leftist policy commitments and radical demands for party democracy, are strategically more radical than lobbyists and especially pragmatists. After all, the cognitive perception of strategic constraints is itself influenced by ideological beliefs and preferences.

Because Agalev operates in an environment of higher left-libertarian cleavage mobilization and incorporates a larger share of ideologues and lobbyists, it is likely that the party subscribes to a more radical strategic

perspective than Ecolo. Moreover, in Agalev the differentiation of intra-party groups is sufficiently pronounced to detect statistically significant correlations between groups of activists and strategic preferences. In Ecolo the dominance of moderate policy positions and of pragmatists at all levels of the party organization suggests that the party follows a solidly moderate strategy and experiences few significant internal strategic cleavages.

Our survey covered strategic viewpoints with two questions.¹⁸ First, militants were asked whether they consider themselves to be “realists” or “fundamentalists” in ecological politics. These notions are used to denote support of radical or moderate strategies within the deeply factionalized West German Greens, but their strategic meaning is also commonly understood in Belgium. “Fundamentalists” insist on strategies that preserve the purity of the party program, regardless of the consequences for the party’s ability to appeal to marginal voters or find allies. “Realists” put greater emphasis on electoral success and winning political office and are content with incremental political reform.

Most Agalev and Ecolo militants locate themselves somewhere between fundamentalism and realism (table 4-9A). Yet there is a larger number of pure fundamentalists in Agalev, whereas realists have a slight edge in Ecolo. As we would expect, the higher mobilization of the left-libertarian cleavage in Flanders translates into somewhat greater strategic radicalism among party activists. Differences between the two parties stand out in sharper relief in responses to a second question in which militants indicated whether they would consider joining a coalition government if Agalev and Ecolo won votes in the 1985 elections. Whereas the first question on realism and fundamentalism elicits a statement of pure political preference, the question on government coalitions induces militants to reflect on what is politically feasible and practical. Now an overwhelming majority of activists in both parties supports a moderate or “realist” strategic position and welcomes negotiations to include the ecology parties in a government coalition. Still, there is a much stronger residual of strategic radicalism in Agalev than in Ecolo (table 4-9B). Again, the aggregate comparison of the militants’ responses in both parties confirms our main hypothesis that parties support more radical strategies in an environment where their core supporters are more mobilized.

To combine the cognitive and evaluative aspects of strategic choices, we have constructed a single index of strategic radicalism which sums the militants’ scores on the realism/fundamentalism question, ranging

Table 4-9 Measures of Strategic Radicalism in Agalev and Ecolo (in percentages)

		Agalev	Ecolo	All	
A. Would you place yourself among the “fundamentalists” or rather among the “realists” in your party?					
	Clearly fundamentalist	8	1		
	Among the fundamentalists	10	8		
	Closer to fundamentalists	18	18		
	Between both camps	30	32		
	Closer to realists	21	28		
	Among the realists	10	1		
	Clearly realist	3	11		
	<i>N</i>	154	88		
B. If your party gains votes, would you be willing to give it a chance to join a coalition government?					
	Yes, give party chance	34	68		
	Yes, give chance, but with reservations	35	21		
	No, tends to give party no chance	23	11		
	No, definitely no chance	8	—		
	<i>N</i>	150	85		
C. Summary index of strategic radicalism					
	Most moderate position	3–5	20	35	25
		6–8	34	42	37
	Intermediate positions	9	15	10	13
		10–12	24	12	20
	Most radical position	13–15	8	1	5
	Average value		8.28	6.21	7.53
	<i>N</i>		157	89	246

from 1 to 7, and their score on support for coalition governments, ranging from 1 to 4. We have multiplied scores on the second question by two to give it about the same weight in the index as the first one. The index of strategic radicalism then ranges from a value of 3, or maximum “realism,” to 15, or maximum “fundamentalism” (table 4-9C). The average score for Ecolo activists is 6.2, well on the “realist” side of the scale; for Agalev the average is 8.3, which still falls short of the scale’s

half-way point between realism and fundamentalism (a score of nine) but is distinctly more radical than Ecolo's. Due to missing responses, we lose about 10 percent of our cases. Where one question is answered, we have added an equivalent score on the second question in order to minimize missing cases.

We can now analyze whether the aggregate differences between Agalev and Ecolo are due to generic variations between the two parties or to the greater radicalism of ideologues and lobbyists in each of them. If Agalev is more radical than Ecolo, because it has more ideologues, then differences between the militants' strategic orientations are less due to their perception of the parties' strategic capabilities than to their political beliefs and demands. Table 4-10 demonstrates that ideologues indeed are strategically more radical than pragmatists. In Ecolo the relationship between subgroup and strategic outlook does not quite reach statistical significance because of the very small number of lobbyists and ideologues in that party. When we aggregate both data sets, the linkage between party subgroup and strategic outlook is highly significant (χ^2 : $p < .001$). Given the greater strategic radicalism of ideologues, the difference between Agalev and Ecolo is primarily explained by the higher ratio of ideologues in the Flemish party. In both parties lobbyists situate themselves between ideologues and pragmatists somewhere in the middle of the strategic spectrum. This confirms the argument we presented in chapter 1 that interest group specialists in political parties decide on strategies opportunistically and support whatever strategy may serve their selective political demands best in a particular power configuration.

Table 4-10 also shows, however, that the linkage between type of party activist and strategic choice is quite limited. Even among ideologues with far-reaching policy ambitions, only one quarter to one third endorse radical strategies. This finding suggests that cognitive factors, an assessment of what appears politically feasible, not just what is desirable, intervene between political preferences and strategic choice. In Belgium at least three reasons explain why Agalev and Ecolo militants tend toward strategic moderation.

First, by international standards, even in Flanders the mobilization of left-libertarian movements and the intensity of protest events is rather low when compared to other West European countries, such as Denmark, the Netherlands, or West Germany, where left-libertarian parties have more often chosen a radical strategic position. Second, the salience of strategic questions is low in the present Belgian multiparty system. Since

Table 4-10 Strategic Radicalism and Political Orientation in Agalev and Ecolo (in percentages)

	Pragmatists	Lobbyists	Ideologues
Agalev			
Strategic moderation (index 3–6)	38	26	38
Intermediate strategic position (index 7–10)	46	57	31
Strategic radicalism (index 11–15)	15	17	31
<i>N</i>	52	42	32
Cramer's V: .381			
Chi ² : <i>p</i> = .048			
Ecolo			
Strategic moderation (index 3–6)	68	42	25
Intermediate strategic position (index 7–10)	27	50	50
Strategic radicalism (index 11–15)	5	8	25
<i>N</i>	44	12	4
Cramer's V: .651			
Chi ² : <i>p</i> = .114			

all conventional parties are willing and able to coalesce with each other, it is unlikely that Agalev or Ecolo will get into a pivotal position in the process of government formation. Because of the parties' low bargaining power in coalition formation, strategic issues are also unlikely to polarize the party militants. The salience of strategic questions is further reduced by the fact that in democracies with consociational decisionmaking procedures, government participation does not necessarily translate into policy influence and opposition status does not necessarily entail exclusion from policy influence (cf. Lijphart 1977a; Strom 1984). As a consequence of these three factors, the low salience of the strategic controversy is likely to reduce the ideological constraint between programmatic radicalism and strategic positions.

Patterns of Political Belief in Ecology Parties: A Synthesis

To conclude our analysis we can now examine the interrelationship between all dimensions of political beliefs we have discussed in the preceding chapters. In chapter 3 we employed the militants' L-R self-placements and their organizational dissatisfaction with party democracy to construct the groups of ideologues and pragmatists. We also asked militants to assess the role of elite control in the party as a limit on party democracy (table 3-3). An obvious alternative interpretation of limitations to party democracy is that grass-roots militants themselves make too little effort to participate in decisionmaking ("membership lethargy"), a proposition analyzed in greater detail in chapter 7 but worth including in this summary of political beliefs. In chapter 4, we have explored the militants' policy positions and their strategic preferences. The most important internal divisions concerned the extent to which activists reject capitalist institutions of economic governance (anticapitalism) and the extent to which they support a postmodern deep ecologism.

It is now convenient to explore the dimensionality of all these elements of political belief systems by a principal component analysis (table 4-11). The first factor loads most strongly on various indicators of organizational radicalism, such as support for the theory of elite control and organizational discontent and rejection of membership lethargy as an obstacle of party democracy. Yet it is also linked to strategic radicalism, as well as to anticapitalist policy programs. There is also a weak positive link to leftist self-placements and endorsement of postmodern deep ecology. In this sense the first factor constitutes a "super-dimension" of political beliefs, tying issue positions, strategy, and views of party organization together and separating "radicals" from "moderates."¹⁹

Whereas component I reproduces our polarity between pragmatists and ideologues, component II contrasts individuals who place themselves on the left but support liberal-individualist and less anticapitalist positions and are slightly more content with party democracy to postmodern deep ecologists with less leftist but organizationally more radical leanings. Since we found in table 4-8 that lobbyists are considerably more deep ecologist but no more anticapitalist than other militants, this dimension appears to separate lobbyists from all other militants.

Overall, the principal component analysis thus confirms our choice of variables when we constructed the subgroups of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists (chapter 3). Each of the two major ideological dimen-

Table 4-11 The Dimensions of Political Beliefs among Agalev and Ecolo Militants: A Principal Component Analysis

	Principal component I: Generalized radicalism vs. general moderation	Principal component II: Postmodern reformism vs. modern radicalism
Organizational discontent	+ .51	+ .09
Elite control as impediment of party democracy	+ .51	+ .24
Strategic radicalism	+ .46	+ .05
Anticapitalism	+ .35	+ .22
Membership lethargy as impediment of party democracy	− .31	− .29
Leftist self-placement	+ .17	− .66
Postmodern deep ecology	+ .15	+ .62
Explained variance	26.84%	20.29%
Eigenvalues	1.88	1.42

sions is represented with one key variable, organizational discontent and L-R self-placements. Ideologues are activists who take radical positions on both accounts, while pragmatists endorse organizational and programmatic moderation. Lobbyists represent an intermediate group which requires specification with further variables, such as movement affiliation, to explain the configuration with more moderate L-R self-placements and postmodern deep ecologism.

Conclusion

We have shown in this chapter that Agalev and Ecolo, in general, represent left-libertarian policies. They are libertarian because they call for participation and personal autonomy beyond markets and public bureaucracies. They are leftist because they challenge the mechanisms that govern economic choice in market capitalism. By blending post-materialist, ecological, leftist, and libertarian demands together, ecology parties constitute a “second left” which defies the conventional alternatives of bureaucratic, statist socialism and liberal free-market capitalism. Yet the internal debates in Agalev and Ecolo illustrate that

old questions about economic governance and the autonomy of the individual in a market order do not simply disappear. They are transformed and resurface in ecology parties as cleavages concerning the desirability of anticapitalist reforms. While gaining a plurality of economic and cultural meanings, right and left remain meaningful political concepts and are employed in systematic ways by most party activists. Leftism is associated with anticapitalist, deep ecology programs. More centrist positions, in contrast, are less inclined to change the economic governance or the social and cultural orientations that have prevailed in Western free market societies.

Questions of party strategy are moderately linked to the militants' ideological positions but do not directly follow from them. The fusion of political preferences and strategic choices is mediated by cognitive factors: what are the resources, allies, and facilities ecology parties can employ to pursue certain strategic objectives? The general strategic moderation of Belgian ecology party militants derives from a sober interpretation of the Belgian opportunity structure for ecological politics and is reinforced by the predominantly moderate policy outlook of Agalev's and Ecolo's activists.

Concerns about the democratic form of party organization, strategy, L-R self-placements, and policy objectives are elements of belief systems which are systematically related to each other. For this reason we could find a statistically significant relationship between the three types of party activists—ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists—which have been defined by the militants' views on party organization and ideological self-placements, and the militants' strategic and programmatic orientations. Ideologues are indeed more radical in programmatic and strategic respects than lobbyists. Pragmatists, in turn, are more moderate than lobbyists. The relationship between subgroups and ideological positions, finally, can account for the often quite profound differences between Agalev and Ecolo. Because Agalev in Flanders operates in an environment in which left-libertarian issues are more politicized than in Wallonia, it attracts more ideologues and lobbyists than Ecolo.

5 The Social Background of Left-Libertarian Activists

Party activists do not represent a random sample of a country's adults but are drawn from groups with distinct resources, experiences, and orientations that predispose them to involvement in party politics in general and certain types of parties in particular. In order to understand the internal group structure and dynamic of coalition building in parties, it is useful to begin with a review of the social and cultural background conditions that characterize militants in Agalev and Ecolo. We would like to know how ecology party activists differ from a variety of reference groups: the parties' voters, the adult population at large, and the activists involved in conventional socialist, liberal, or Christian-conservative parties in Belgium and elsewhere. Later on we will employ the activists' social background as one set of variables that may explain the subgroup formation in ecology parties.

In the literature on political participation at least three hypotheses have been advanced to identify individuals who are likely to become party activists. First, cultural milieu and family socialization may shape an individual's propensities toward involvement in a particular party (socialization hypothesis). Second, an individual's economic means, social ties, and intellectual capacities to articulate political ideas may influence political commitment (resource endowment hypothesis). Third, a distinct occupational experience and trajectory of social mobility may structure political mobilization. In the case of left-libertarian parties affiliation with the "new middle class" of white collar employees, particularly in the (public) social service sector, has been singled out as one determinant of party activism (new middle-class hypothesis).

The three hypotheses are not entirely incompatible. None of them would lead us to expect that party activists are a random sample of the population. Still, each theory yields somewhat different predictions about the socioeconomic profile of Agalev and Ecolo militants. For socialization theories party activists should show fairly close affinity to their parents' political behavior and establish a continuity of political orientations across generations. For resource endowment theories Agalev and Ecolo militants should have greater abilities to participate in politics than the average adult or the parties' electorate but have similar socioeconomic attributes as activists in other parties. For "new middle-class" theories, finally, the activists should highlight certain unique features that are also typical of left-libertarian voters but distinguish them from the population at large or from activists in conventional parties.

In addition to these three interpretations we will examine cultural and socioeconomic differences among Agalev and Ecolo activists in the light of our own theory of intraparty group formation. We will explore how social background conditions relate to our three types of party activists. However, we must postpone to the following chapter a discussion of whether sociological variables directly influence the militants' political activism and beliefs or whether they are mediated through each activist's biography of political involvement.

Cultural Socialization

The importance of family background and socialization for political activism has remained controversial (Czudnowski 1975: 188–93). Findings are inconsistent and often difficult to generalize beyond narrow cultural contexts. The socialization theory suggests that left-libertarian

activists should come from a liberal, progressive, secular political milieu and have highly educated parents who oriented their offspring toward an individualist life-style, critical of hierarchical authority and highly supportive of participatory, egalitarian collective decisionmaking. At least for the United States, some studies have identified fairly strong linkages between the political orientation of activists in the student movement, an early left-libertarian cause, and the cultural milieu of their parents. Student activists were above average recruited from more affluent and educated liberal and leftist homes where they first developed a nonconformist political outlook.¹

In our survey the transmission of political preferences from parents to Agalev and Ecolo activists can be examined by comparing the parents' and the militants' electoral preferences before Agalev and Ecolo came into existence. Militants were asked to name the one or two parties they and their mother and father had supported most frequently. These data help us to answer two questions: (1) How similar are parents' and children's political choices? (2) How intensely do parents and children identify with political parties they vote for? Always voting for the same party indicates a higher degree of identification than vote switching.²

Table 5-1 shows that parents' party loyalty is greater than that of ecology activists. Moreover, while their parents voted predominantly for the Christian and, as a distant second, for the ethnolinguistic parties, their offspring voted primarily for socialist and ethnolinguistic parties. In third place, and still ahead of the parents' first choice, Agalev and Ecolo activists supported the small parties of the radical left.

Based on the militants' perception of the ideological distance between the ecologists and other Belgian parties,³ as well as expert judgments of Belgian parties on a right-left scale (cf. Castles and Mair 1984), we have constructed a composite index of voting orientation for militants and their parents. The Belgian liberals are on the right (= 1), followed by the Christian democrats (= 2), the linguistic parties (= 3), the socialists (= 4), and the radical left (= 5). We have summed each individual's two voting preferences for political parties or, where only one was given, multiplied that preference by two, yielding a voting index reaching from the far right (= 2) to the far left (= 10).

Table 5-2 illustrates the dramatic shift to the left that occurred from the parents' generation, represented here by the fathers' voting behavior, to that of the militants. With few differences, this shift took place within both Ecolo and Agalev families.⁴ The fathers' voting record helps us little to predict the offspring's party preferences. Right-wing parents are almost as likely to have sons and daughters who voted for the far left as

Table 5-1 Party Preferences of Ecology Party Activists and Their Parents before Ecolo and Agalev Had Been Founded (in percentages)

	Father	Mother	Militants
Voted always for the same party; among them:	78.5	81.4	60.1
Christian Democrats	44.8	58.0	12.4
Socialists	10.3	8.4	17.0
Ethnolinguistic parties	12.1	11.1	19.8
Liberals	9.4	4.0	0.9
Radical Left (Communists, Maoists, Trotskyists)	1.8	0.0	10.1
Voted for at least two different parties; among them voted at least once for: ^a	21.5	18.6	39.9
Christian Democrats	15.7	12.8	11.4
Socialists	3.6	4.4	18.3
Ethnolinguistic parties	12.6	11.1	17.4
Liberals	6.7	2.2	1.8
Radical Left	0.5	0.5	20.6
Other parties/never voted for a political party before	4.3	6.4	10.3
	100 (N = 223)	100 (N = 226)	100 (N = 218)

^aSum of individual party support adds up to twice the total of party switchers since each switcher indicates two party preferences.

more liberal and progressive parents. The association of intergenerational voting behavior is statistically insignificant.

How do these findings bear on the socialization hypothesis? Ecology party activists do come overproportionally from a specific political setting, a Catholic family milieu, but they have moved far away from these origins. The parent/offspring relationship constitutes a microcosm of the dramatic decline the Catholic pillar of Belgian politics has undergone since the early 1960s. Other observations reinforce this conclusion. A majority of the activists attended Catholic rather than state-run schools and universities and 63 percent are still members of a Catholic health insurance. Yet a plurality of militants consider themselves to be atheists or agnostics, while only a minority declare to be Catholic (table 5-3). The balance are “independent Christians” who reject church authority and Catholic doctrines concerning moral conduct and political orientation but still subscribe to some ethical and theological doctrines

Table 5-2 Generational Transmission of Voting Preferences from Fathers to Militants (index of party support ranging from 2 = rightist to 10 = far leftist voting) (in percentages)

	Father's voting record		
	Support of the right (index 2–4)	Support of the center (index 5–7)	Support of the left (index 8–10)
Militant's voting record before supporting Agalev or Ecolo			
Support of the right (index 2–4)	21	2	15
Support of the center (index 5–7)	39	51	31
Support of the left (index 8–10)	40	47	54
	100% (N = 112)	100% (N = 49)	100% (N = 26)

Table 5-3 Religious Beliefs and Practices of Ecology Party Activists (in percentages)

	Agalev	Ecolo	All
A. Religious commitment			
Catholic	27.0	13.2	22.0
Independent Christian	40.9	31.9	37.6
Agnostic/atheist	30.8	51.6	38.4
Other	1.3	3.3	2.0
	100 (N = 159)	100 (N = 91)	100 (N = 250)
B. Church attendance			
Several times per month	23.8	8.1	18.1
About once per month	11.5	3.5	8.6
Less than once per month	7.7	2.3	5.8
Only on religious holidays or special occasions	23.7	28.7	25.5
Never	33.3	57.5	42.0
	100 (N = 156)	100 (N = 87)	100 (N = 243)

of Christianity.⁵ Among Agalev militants a somewhat greater percentage declares to be Catholic or to attend church regularly than in Ecolo, reflecting both the overall greater Catholicism in Flanders and the specifically Catholic origins of Agalev's precursor organization *Anders Gaan Leven*. In spite of their stronger Catholic ties, however, Agalev militants have not been significantly more conservative in their past party preferences than their Ecolo colleagues.

The activists' social milieu is also influenced by the parents' education. For 15.4 percent of the militants the highest educational degree earned by their father or mother was a university degree. Another 18.6 percent have one parent who completed nonuniversity higher education or the equivalent of a college education. Given that even after the educational reforms of the 1960s and 1970s in Belgium only about 15 percent of an age cohort go to university and another 20 percent receive a college degree, it is likely that the activists' parents have a higher than average education, especially if we consider that parents were brought up in an environment with more restricted educational opportunities.⁶ Ecolo parents have a slightly higher level of educational accomplishment than Agalev parents, but the difference is not significant.

Do these findings confirm the socialization hypothesis? Left-libertarian activists in Belgium are recruited to a considerable extent from more educated Catholic families and, in this sense, do not reflect a cross-section of the population, but a particular milieu. While this *formal* association between cultural background and political militancy supports the socialization hypothesis, the *substantive* link between Catholicism and secular left-libertarian politics is counterintuitive and not predicted by the socialization hypothesis. The socialization hypothesis claims that a party's activists should be more entrenched in the political subculture a party represents than its voters and sympathizers. This is confirmed, for instance, by studies of the recruitment of communist party activists and functionaries from communist families.⁷ While a transmission of political beliefs and propensities for political activism across generations has been observed in a wide range of studies,⁸ this is evidently *not* the case with Agalev and Ecolo activists. They represent a new political agenda which does not build on existing political subcultures. The clear linkage to the Catholic pillar of Belgian society is of a negative kind: ecology parties rise out of the crumbling religious cleavage that used to organize large segments of the Belgian middle class and even a considerable minority of workers, as the strength of the Catholic unions demonstrates.

We have found little empirical material to assess whether Agalev and

Ecolo voters primarily emerge from the same decaying Catholic subculture as the party activists. Studies of Agalev's gross volatility of electoral support, however, provide indirect evidence that activists and voters originate in the same milieu. In the 1985 and 1987 elections Agalev won most new votes from the Christian democrats and the Flemish regionalists *Volksunie*, that is parties representing the Catholic sphere in Flemish society or having been spun off by it. Agalev also gained substantial numbers of voters from the radical small New Left parties which had also been a favorite party preference of many Agalev activists.⁹ In contrast, relatively few new Agalev voters had previously supported the parties of the two other pillars of Belgian politics, the socialists and the liberals.

Overall, the socialization hypothesis shows only a modest fit with our data on Agalev and Ecolo activists who appear to express a negative, conflictual relationship to their parents' political milieu, the disintegrating Catholic pillar of Belgian society. Whereas most activists in conventional parties tend to come from political subcultures nurturing the beliefs and dispositions articulated by a party, this is clearly not the case with the ecologists.

Socioeconomic Resource Endowment

If socialization is a weak predictor of left-libertarian party activism, maybe socioeconomic resources and capabilities can tell us more about why people get involved in ecology parties. Most existing studies show that superior resources lead to higher political involvement, particularly conventional participation in elections and parties.¹⁰ Education, gender, income, social status, and—less consistently—age are aspects of individual resource endowments linked to participation. Showing that the resources of ecology party activists are greater than those of the general public and of their electorate would support resource endowment theory. Furthermore, if resource endowments are decisive for party activism, Agalev and Ecolo party militants should have similar socioeconomic attributes as activists in conventional Belgian parties.

Compared to the overall adult Belgian population and even to the young age cohorts in the educational system, Agalev and Ecolo activists have very high educational accomplishments. Forty-four percent have attended university and an additional 33 percent have gone to a technical college, thus exceeding the enrollment of even the younger age cohorts in higher education by substantial margins. Agalev's and Ecolo's electorates, too, tend to be better educated than the population but not quite

Table 5-4 Educational Level of Belgian Voters and Ecology Party Militants (in percentages)

	Participants in the Agalev and Ecolo 1985 conferences	Conference delegates of the conventional Belgian parties (1979)	Agalev and Ecolo sympathizers in 1982, 1984, and 1986 (pooled data)	General adult population in Belgium in 1982, 1984, and 1986 (pooled data)
Basic education				
General secondary schooling and oc- cupational training	14	39		
Finished education by age 16			12	44
Intermediate education				
Advanced technical training or college	42	26		
Completed educa- tion by age 21			53	38
Higher education				
University atten- dance or university degree	44	35		
Education com- pleted after age 21 or still in education			35	17
Total	100	100	100	99 ^a
Number of cases	(252)	(1,363)	(147)	(2,521)

^aRounding error.

Sources: Agalev and Ecolo conference survey (column 1); European Political Parties Middle Level Elite Survey 1979 (column 2); pooled data from Eurobarometers 17 (1982), 21 (1984), and 25 (1986) (columns 3 and 4).

as well as the party activists (see table 5-4). Agalev and Ecolo militants have even higher levels of formal education than the conference delegates of the other major Belgian parties (compare columns 1 and 2 in table 5-4). Also in other countries left-libertarian party militants have among the highest educational accomplishments when compared to militants of other parties.¹¹

Table 5-5 Monthly Net Individual Income of Ecology Militants
(in percentages)

No income	11.5
Less than 25,000 Bfrs (rd. \$650)	13.5
Between 25,000 and 35,000 Bfrs (\$650–\$920)	28.6
Between 35,000 and 50,000 Bfrs (\$920–\$1,350)	34.5
Between 50,000 and 75,000 Bfrs (\$1,350–\$1,980)	9.9
Over 75,000 Bfrs	2.2

With respect to income, however, ecology party militants are not as exceptional as militants in other parties. In established European parties the income of most national conference delegates is in the upper quintile of the income distribution (cf. Niedermayer and Schmitt 1983). Yet in Agalev and Ecolo the militants' income at most equals the distribution in the general population. One quarter of all militants have no income or less than \$650 per month, which translates into an annual pretax and pre-transfer gross income of less than \$11,000 (table 5-5).¹² At the low end of the income distribution in the Belgian population, 51 percent of the 1985 Belgian tax returns declared less than \$11,000 per year in taxable income.¹³ While Agalev and Ecolo militants may thus be somewhat underrepresented in the lower income categories, they may be overrepresented in the middle income groups. Twenty-nine percent of activists have annual gross personal incomes between \$11,000 and \$18,000 and another 35 percent between \$18,000 and \$27,000. Twelve percent exceed that amount. At the top end with incomes above 1,000,000 bfrs (or about \$27,000) in taxable earnings, the percentage of ecologists just about equals the percentage of tax returns in that bracket (12 to 11 percent).

Given the different income concepts employed in the official statistics and in the activists' survey, our comparison remains a crude approximation which must be treated with great caution. Yet it justifies the conclusion that the ecologists on average tend to be among the middle-income earners, not at the very top or bottom. This makes Agalev and Ecolo activists quite similar to their voters who have average to below-average incomes (Swyngedouw 1986) but distinguishes them from the activists in traditional parties with generally very high incomes.¹⁴ Moreover, it casts doubt on the adequacy of the resource endowment hypothesis which would have predicted that Agalev and Ecolo activists should be more affluent.

In part the comparatively low income of ecologists may be explained in terms of two additional variables relating to the concept of resource endowments: age and gender. Young people have lower incomes and are overrepresented among Agalev and Ecolo convention participants, both in comparison to the population at large as well as to traditional parties. In 1985, 21.7 percent of the Belgian adult population (age twenty and older) belonged to the twenty- to twenty-nine-year age bracket and 26.3 percent of the party activists. This discrepancy is most visible, however, among the thirty- to thirty-nine-year age bracket where 18.4 percent of Belgian adults correspond to 47.9 percent of the Agalev and Ecolo party activists.¹⁵ Only 25.1 percent of the militants are forty and older, compared to 59.9 percent of Belgian adults. Again, differences between Agalev and Ecolo are quite limited, with Ecolo militants being slightly older than Agalev militants.

The age distribution of Agalev and Ecolo militants quite closely matches that of their voters (cf. Swyngedouw 1986; Swyngedouw and Billiet 1988) but contrasts with that of party militants in conventional parties where the youngest-age cohorts tend to be underrepresented and the bulk of militants attending national party conferences is older than forty years.¹⁶ Since experience, self-confidence, and political skill may, up to a certain point, covary with age, the youthful character of ecology parties tends to refute the resource endowment theory.

Since women earn less than men and ecology parties attract more female activists than other parties do, the gender distribution may also depress the income of Agalev and Ecolo militants compared to that reported by conference participants of other parties. Twenty-five percent of the surveyed Agalev and Ecolo activists are women, a ratio significantly higher than corresponding ratios in conventional parties in many countries¹⁷ and especially in Belgium, a Catholic country with a predominantly traditional conception of women's roles, which is reflected in the low participation of women in politics.¹⁸

Although women have made considerable headway in Agalev and Ecolo, they are still underrepresented compared to the adult population and the parties' voters. This discrepancy is greater in Ecolo where 20 percent of the activists were women than in Agalev with 28 percent women militants. Thus, the socioeconomic resource theory of political participation is still supported by this gender gap, although Agalev and Ecolo do somewhat better than most European parties.

Overall, our test of the resource endowment hypothesis yields a mixed result. It is unambiguously supported by the educational levels of ecology party activists, and in part by the gender ratios in Agalev and Ecolo.

It is refuted, however, by the age and income distribution of ecology activists. Moreover, age, gender, and income distribution clearly distinguish Agalev and Ecolo conference participants from those of traditional parties. Ecolo and Agalev militants tend to reflect the social composition of their electorate which is younger, somewhat more likely to be female than the population, and earns modest incomes. In contrast, conventional parties of the right and increasingly also those of the left involve a fairly homogeneous social elite of older males with high status, high income, and high education that is very different from the parties' electorate.¹⁹ In conventional parties militants have very high resource endowments and are socioeconomically different from their voters. In Agalev and Ecolo militants have fewer resource endowments and are more similar to their voters.

"Middle-Class Radicalism"

While the configuration of attributes among ecology party activists—youth, low income, comparatively high share of women, high education—appears odd from the perspective of resource endowment theory, it is consistent with what a theory of "middle-class radicalism" (Parkin 1972) and many recent works on the rise of new social movements and new political attitudes would predict to find among left-libertarian activists.²⁰ The theory maintains that in advanced capitalist democracies the educated new middle class of white-collar employees and professionals in the social service sector develops a new style of politics, detached from traditional class, religious, or territorial cleavages and more concerned with intangible social, cultural, and military policy issues. These groups engage in protest politics demanding a more participatory and egalitarian society. The leading activists in social movements and left-libertarian parties are young educated militants and increasingly women. Studies of protest behavior in a number of countries tend to confirm that youth, education, and secularization have a positive impact on political protest (Barnes and Kaase 1979: 100 and 131; Rochon 1982). Being female is still found to affect protest involvement negatively, although this relationship is weakening among younger age cohorts.

Our own data on the age, gender, education, and religious practices of Agalev and Ecolo militants are consistent with the "middle-class radicalism" theory. The theory can also explain why left-libertarians have no exceptionally high incomes. Aside from the gender and age composition of the left-libertarian clientele, this has to do with the nature of the mili-

Table 5-6 Occupation of Belgian Voters and Ecology Party Militants (in percentages)

Educational level	Participants in the Agalev and Ecolo 1985 conferences	Conference delegates of the conventional Belgian parties (1979)	Agalev and Ecolo sympathizers in 1982, 1984, and 1986 (pooled data)	General adult population in Belgium in 1982, 1984, and 1986 (pooled data)
Technical and liberal professions, management and business	12	20	10	10
Education, personal services, media, political associations	40	19	white collar 31	19
Administrative-technical occupations	19	37		
Blue-collar employment	3	9	15	19
Students, military, and alternative service	8	11	17	11
Not active in formal labor markets or education: homemakers, retirees	8		15	34
Unemployed	5		12	7
No response, insufficient data	5	3		
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	(256)	(1,363)	(147)	(2,420)

Sources: See table 5-4.

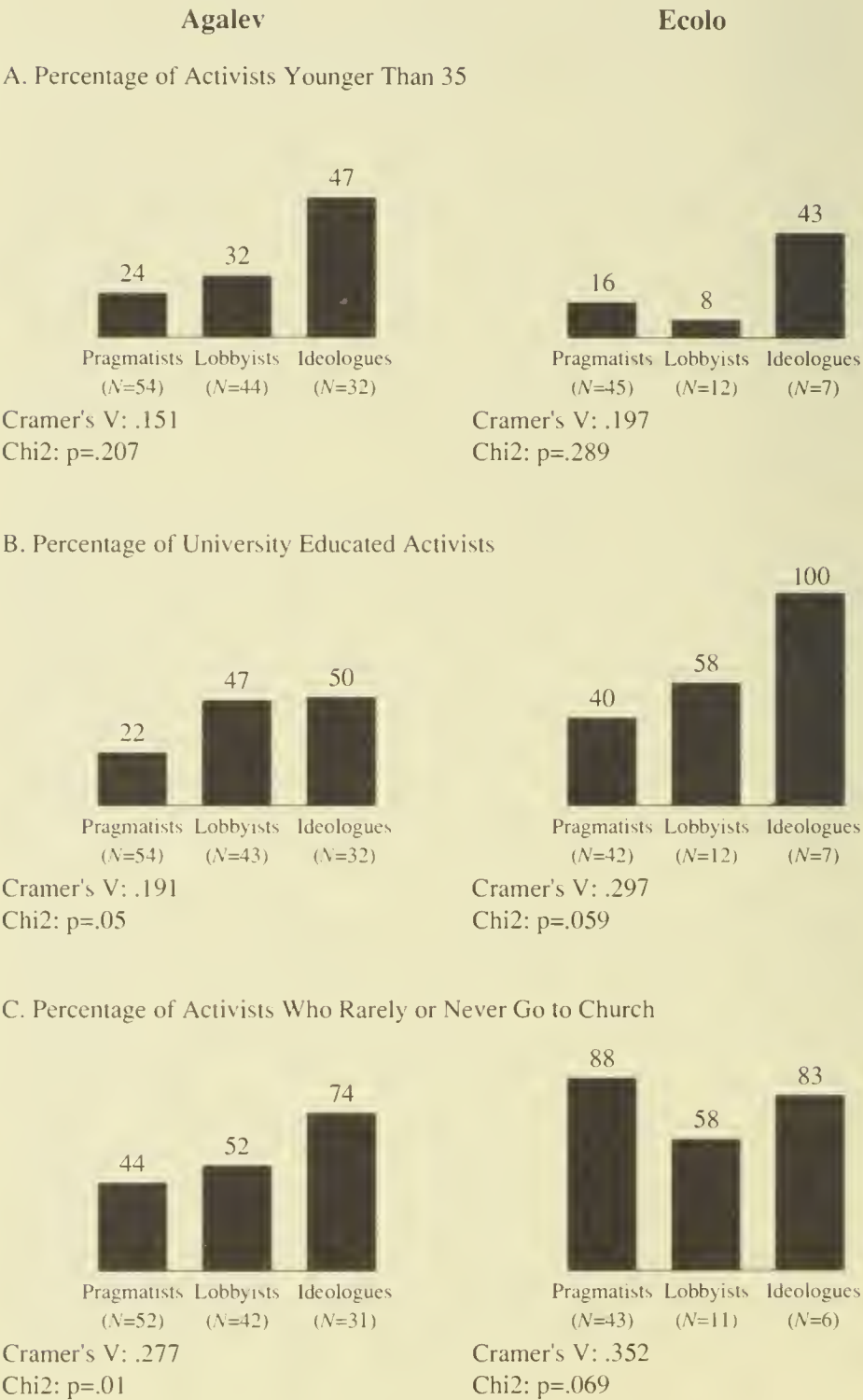
tants' occupations and the jobs they typically seek out. Left-libertarians tend to be "symbol specialists" in their professional life.²¹ They produce intellectual artifacts (as journalists, artists, writers) and work in personal service jobs (teaching, health care, welfare, etc.) that typically yield modest salaries and social status rewards when compared to legal and business professions requiring comparable levels of education and expertise.

Among Agalev and Ecolo activists no less than 42.5 percent have a professional training in the social sciences, liberal arts, or health care. Also the distribution of occupational fields shows clearly that "symbol specialists" are predominant (table 5-6). Forty percent work in "symbol specializing" professions. However, blue-collar and administrative jobs are substantially underrepresented. Incidentally, this table refutes the speculation that left-libertarian party activists are primarily drawn from the ranks of the unemployed intellectual proletariat. Given that Belgium had close to 15 percent unemployment in 1985, the proportion of unemployed party militants is small.²²

Table 5-6 also demonstrates considerable differences between the ecology party militants and their counterparts in eight conventional Belgian parties. Conventional parties do not include as many "symbol specialists." Instead, they overrepresent the technical and liberal professions, entrepreneurs, and administrative technical occupations. Further, blue-collar workers are not as underrepresented as in ecology parties, yet the unemployed are all but absent from traditional parties. Whereas the elites in the economic and administrative institutions of capitalist democracies form the social base of activism in these parties, ecologists are a counterelite of cultural and social service professionals.

Overall, our data on the sociodemographic background of Agalev and Ecolo militants support the theory of middle-class radicalism best. Ecology parties attract a distinct segment of young, highly educated, not very affluent individuals who most likely work in "symbol specializing" professions. Compared across parties, the socioeconomic and demographic correspondence between voters and party militants tends to be greater in Agalev and Ecolo than in the conventional Belgian parties. Ecology party activists share important commonalities with Agalev's and Ecolo's wider electoral clientele. Still, ecology party militants are even better educated than the average ecology voter; the parties appeal to white-collar service sector employees, but these occupational groups are even more overrepresented among party activists; ecology party voters tend to be secular, and this is even more the case among party activists.

Figure 5-1 Social Background and Political Orientation in Ecological Politics
(in percentages)



The Social Background of Ideologues, Lobbyists, and Pragmatists

Our final question in this chapter is whether the socioeconomic selectivity that characterizes the ecology party electorates and militants is carried further inside the parties and helps to account for ideological group differences. If increasing levels of interest in left-libertarian politics are associated with certain ideal-typical socioeconomic and demographic attributes (age, education, secularization), do the most radical ecology party activists exhibit these attributes to a greater extent than the moderates? In other words do socioeconomic attributes also influence what *kind* of activist an individual becomes once he or she joins Agalev or Ecolo?

We have provided a tentative answer to this question in figure 5-1 where we have depicted the percentage of pragmatists, lobbyists, and ideologues in each party that stand out by their youth, university education, and secularism.²³ Given the relatively small number of cases, statistical relations between intraparty group adherence and sociodemographic properties are not always significant. Yet in general our hypothesis is confirmed that these properties correlate with intraparty group membership. The radical ideologues tend to be the youngest, most educated, and most secular in Agalev. In Ecolo similar relationships emerge for age and education. Here secularization, however, is not related to group membership because most Ecolo activists are non-religious.

As we have shown in chapter 4, ideologues tend to endorse more anticapitalist and postmodern deep ecology positions. Hence, it is not surprising to find moderate but usually significant correlations between age and education, on the one hand, and anticapitalism and deep ecology, on the other (table 5-7). Secularization has no impact on anticapitalism but very strongly reinforces postmodern deep ecology positions.²⁴ Especially those who have cut themselves loose from religious moorings search for a new sense of community and social organization that goes beyond modern liberal individualism.

Conclusion

We have shown in this chapter that socialization and resource mobilization theories provide a less adequate explanation for recruitment to activism in the Belgian ecology parties Agalev and Ecolo than the “new middle-class” or “middle-class radicalism” hypothesis. Compar-

Table 5-7 Age, Education, Secularization, and the Ideology of Ecology Party Activists (Pearson's *r*'s)

	Anticapitalism	Postmodern deep ecology
Age	−.10 (<i>p</i> = .11) (<i>N</i> = 254)	−.13* (<i>N</i> = 254)
Education	+.17** (<i>N</i> = 250)	+.10 (<i>p</i> = .11) (<i>N</i> = 250)
Secularization	.00 (<i>N</i> = 241)	+.40*** (<i>N</i> = 241)

(*) *p* ≤ .1 **p* ≤ .05 ***p* ≤ .01 ****p* ≤ .001

ing Ecolo and Agalev, both parties fit the “new middle-class” pattern quite well. Marked differences exist in their religious and gender composition, and slight variations occur with respect to their age and educational composition. Yet these traits are not systematically linked in such a way that one party fits more clearly the “middle-class radicalism” pattern than the other. Ideal-typically, the more middle-class radical party would have more secular, educated, and younger militants, a greater share of whom is female. Agalev militants are younger and more likely to be female, but Ecolo activists tend to be more secular and slightly more educated. Thus, differential levels of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia do not directly and consistently affect the parties’ socioeconomic and demographic profile.

Such background variables do, however, affect individual career paths and group affiliation inside each party. Among Agalev and Ecolo activists ideologues represent the ideal-typical middle-class radicals, characterized by youth, high education, and secularization. If we rank supporters of left-libertarian politics according to the intensity of their ideological commitment, with voters at the lowest rank, all party activists in the middle, and ideologues at the top, the unique sociodemographic and cultural attributes that characterize left-libertarians appear in ever more purified patterns as we move up the ranks.

6 Careers into Ecological Politics

The decision to join a party is usually not an impulsive act but a step that follows from a trajectory of economic, cultural, and ideological experiences. Party membership is intelligible as the result of a sequence of thought processes and political moves that evolve over time. Often people are gradually eased into the commitment to a voluntary political association or party through “recruitment networks” (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980) that include work relations, personal friends, or interest groups and social organizations in which they have already participated. Since left-libertarian parties lack a cohesive cultural milieu and organizational channels regularly transmitting political ideas to subsequent generations of party supporters, the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s that expressed leftist and

libertarian demands are the most important recruitment network for Agalev and Ecolo militants.

For two reasons we will examine the activists' experiences with social movements before we turn to their involvement in party work. First, studying the political biography of party activists is an important, yet underexploited avenue to explore the militants' motivations for joining parties. Direct survey questions about the material, social, and purposive motivations for contributing to parties tend to be too general to allow for a detailed analysis. Moreover, they are unreliable and yield insincere answers reflecting what activists consider to be socially acceptable reasons for political engagement rather than actual motivations.¹ Knowledge of the activists' political careers, in contrast, provides a more solid "tracer" of motivations and forces that attracted individuals to a party.

Second, the militants' political involvement *before* joining Agalev or Ecolo or *outside* party work may decisively shape their internal party activism, which will be explored in subsequent chapters. As outlined in chapter 1, we expect that ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists engage in different political practices. On the one hand, there are political activities which have been associated with left radicalism: affiliation with the student movement of the 1960s, voting for leftist parties, and participation in disruptive protest events against official government policies. On the other, there is a set of activities affiliated with left-libertarian politics that is more conventional and represents a less direct challenge to the form and content of official politics: membership in the parties' ecological precursor organizations and affiliation with movement organizations, both before joining the ecology party and parallel to activism in the parties. Ideally, ideologues, lobbyists, or pragmatists should exhibit distinct patterns of political practice in social movements outside the parties.

Initial Steps of Political Involvement

In chapter 2 our brief sketch of the parties' history emphasized the role of the student movement in the late 1960s as a catalyst of left-libertarian politics in Belgium. The student movement was a first effort to voice demands for broad political participation and autonomy of individuals and collectivities from corporate and bureaucratic managerial elites.² Thirty-three percent of the Agalev militants and 29 percent of the Ecolo activists say they have participated in the student movement. Given the relatively small fraction of the college age cohort that were actually

reached by the student movement, this participation rate is very high, even if we discount the militants' recollections somewhat and grant that the notion of "student movement" may carry a number of different connotations. Of course, the large percentage of university educated militants make participation in the student movement more likely. Indeed, among the activists there is a modest association between educational achievements and student movement participation ($r = .19$; $p < .01$).

The student movement led to a rejuvenation of Marxist thinking and the founding of New Left parties. In both Agalev and Ecolo past student activism and leftist voting, as measured by the scale presented in table 5-2 above, are quite strongly correlated ($r = +.36$; $p < .001$). Although the ecologists are leaning to the left, this preference is not reflected in the militants' membership in other parties prior to joining Agalev or Ecolo. Only 26 percent of Ecolo militants and 16 percent of Agalev militants, or a total of fifty-six militants, had been in a party before, and these were mostly the center-right Christian democrats (seventeen memberships), the ethnolinguistic parties (fourteen memberships), and the socialists (fourteen memberships). Only eight militants had been affiliated with a far left party. This suggests that radical left-libertarians have always rejected formal political organization and rigid, closed ideological doctrines, even when they supported far left parties in elections for want of a better alternative.³

A different early political experience that facilitated the transition to ecology parties later on was participation in the parties' immediate precursor organizations. Thirty-four percent of Agalev's militants had been members of the Catholic revival movement *Anders Gaan Leven* and this background is positively related to the activists' religious commitment ($r = .22$; $p < .01$) but negatively related to leftist voting ($r = -.34$; $p < .001$). In Ecolo 43 percent had been members of the Belgian section of Friends of the Earth, from which most of the early party leaders emerged. As we suggested in our historical sketch, there is more continuity between Ecolo's precursor organization and subsequent party activism than in Agalev. The Flemish ecologists experienced a greater turnover and influx of new militants than Ecolo, once Agalev detached itself from its precursor organization. We will show later how these differences of militants' background experiences affect the social movement practices of party activists, the composition of intraparty groups, and patterns of participation in party affairs.

Involvement in the student movement, past left voting, and membership in the parties' precursor organizations cannot be explained very

Table 6-1 Agalev Militants: Social Background and Activism in the Party's Precursor Organization

	Membership in the precursor organization Anders Gaan Leven		Participation in the student movement	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Age	+.13	+.19(*)	+.13	+.20*
Gender	.00	(ns) ^a	-.05	(ns)
Education	+.02	(ns)	+.13	+.32**
Parents' education	+.07	(ns)	+.08	(ns)
Parents' left voting	+.07	+.22*	+.08	+.25*
Church attendance	+.07	+.25**	-.08	-.26**
	Adj. R ² : .12*** (N = 105)		Adj. R ² : .14** (N = 105)	

(*) $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$ ^ans = not significant

well in terms of the “sociological” variables we introduced in chapter 5. Socioeconomic, demographic, and cultural attributes may predispose individuals in very general terms to become active in left-libertarian causes, but they help us little to understand variations among patterns of left-libertarian involvement. In Ecolo none of the sociological variables explains the militants’ early political experience. In Agalev participants in the student movement and the party’s precursor organization were somewhat older, more educated, and more often from homes voting for the left than nonparticipants. Church attendance discriminates between student protestors and members of the revival movement (table 6-1). In both parties past leftist voting shows only weak links to age and parents’ voting behavior. In both parties leftists are more likely to be secular. The strongest predictor of left voting, however, is activism in the student movement, not a sociological background variable (table 6-2). Overall, sociocultural resource endowments and orientations are only weakly linked even to the earliest evidence of the activists’ political involvement.

**Social Movement Activism in the 1970s
and 1980s**

In the aftermath of the student movement a certain exhaustion and disenchantment with “grand theory” and the prospects for a radical social

Table 6-2 Determinants of Past Left Voting Preference

	B	Beta
Age	+ .38	+ .14(*)
Gender	− .11	(ns) ^a
Parents' left voting	+ .13	+ .12(*)
Education	+ .04	(ns)
Church attendance	− .36	− .29***
Member of party precursor organization	− .29	(ns)
Active in the student movement	+1.41	+ .35***
Adj. R ² :		.22***
		(N = 152)

(*)p ≤ .1 *p ≤ .05 **p ≤ .01 ***p ≤ .001 ^ans = not significant

transformation convinced many student activists that efforts to change society must focus on more limited cultural and political issue areas. At the same time previously unmobilized citizens began to discover the protection of the environment, technological risks, civil rights, the life chances of women, demilitarization, and the plight of the Third World as important concerns not represented by established interest groups or political parties. The mobilization of new citizens' groups and of former student activists around these issues marked the takeoff of the so-called new social movements.

We must be careful, however, to distinguish different dimensions of involvement in social movements. First, individuals may join *movement organizations* to represent ecological, feminist, and foreign policy demands through activities such as information campaigns, lobbying, or litigation. Yet movement organizations still constitute a fairly “conventional” form of participation rejected by more radical left-libertarians who search for more direct, open, fluid, informal alternatives to the existing political institutions. These activists are more inclined to engage in a unique style of disruptive political action that manifests itself in *protest events*, such as demonstrations, plant occupations, sit-ins, happenings, and consciousness-raising encounter groups.

To distinguish between “conventional” associative behavior and “unconventional” protest activism, we have developed specific measures that will help us to determine the relationship between the activists' political biographies and their ideological orientations.

Our survey asked militants to list all social movement groups they had

Table 6-3 Movement Organization Membership in 1985 (in percentages)

	Agalev (<i>N</i> = 162)	Ecolo (<i>N</i> = 94)	All (<i>N</i> = 256)
Environmental groups	44	38	42
Peace groups	51	27	42
Third world groups	48	27	40
Working class organizations	15	9	12
Women's groups	9	2	7
Other movement affiliations	45	50	47
Average number of group memberships per capita	2.1	1.5	1.9

been or still were a member of at the time of answering the survey. Militants also indicated whether they had entered these groups before joining Agalev or Ecolo, whether they were still active in them, and whether they had held or were holding a formal office in these organizations. Table 6-3 lists five different categories of movements militants were affiliated with in 1985. Membership in environmental, peace, and Third World groups is equally widespread. Working class organizations, however, are much less frequently mentioned. Militants apparently do not think of the highly institutionalized Belgian labor unions as movement organizations, since 36 percent belong to the unions, but only 12 percent declare to be a member of a working class movement group. Women's groups have the smallest percentage of members. Since women represent about 25 percent of our sample, but almost all of the members in women's groups, at least about one in four women are organized in a women's group. In a nutshell Agalev and Ecolo militants are more likely to get involved in "new" left-libertarian issues (ecology, peace, Third World, and women) than working-class politics.

Table 6-3 shows that, across the board, Agalev militants are more willing to join movement organizations than Ecolo activists. While the former belong to an average of 2.1 movement organizations, the latter adhere to only 1.5 of them. This difference is clearly related to the context of social mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia we have discussed in chapter 2. In Flanders, where the left-libertarian cleavage is more mobilized, party activists are more involved in social movements.

The link between social movements and party activism is asymmetri-

Table 6-4 Involvement in Protest Events (in percentages)

	Agalev (N = 162)	Ecolo (N = 94)	All (N = 256)
Demonstrations against nuclear missiles	98	85	93
Demonstrations against nuclear power	57	65	60
March of the young unemployed	31	20	27
Florennade/demonstration and sit-in at a NATO base	20	15	18
May first demonstration/ <i>rerum novarum</i>	19	13	17
Women's day activities	16	13	15
Average number of protest events per capita	2.4	2.1	2.3

cal. While 70 percent of Agalev's and Ecolo's activists belong to at least one movement organization, they represent only a tiny fraction of all those Belgian citizens who at one point or another had been members of or sympathized with social movements. Many Belgian movement supporters still opt for other parties (cf. Müller-Rommel 1987). Other left-libertarians do not get involved in Agalev or Ecolo as a matter of principle because they fear even these parties succumb to the imperatives of organizational efficiency and expediency and therefore are unable to inaugurate a new participatory form of politics. Given these asymmetries, left-libertarian parties are not hegemonic political representatives of the new social movements in politics, but exponents of the movements, involving a few highly committed activists who place the movements' demands on the political agenda and threaten to disrupt the existing party system.

Strong affiliation with movement groups does not necessarily translate into vigorous protest activism, our second dimension to tap involvement in social movements. We asked militants to indicate their participation in a variety of specific *protest events* that had taken place in Belgium between 1980 and 1985 (table 6-4). Demonstrations of the peace movement against the stationing of new medium-range NATO missiles in Belgium clearly attracted the greatest number of activists, followed by protests against nuclear power plants. Yet only 18 percent participated in the much riskier and more involved sit-in at the NATO base in Florennes which led to an attempt to enter the base. Twenty-seven percent joined in a march against youth unemployment, a theme with great importance for parties who attract mostly young voters. Fewer militants attended the traditional annual socialist and Catholic workers' manifestations. The feminist women's day meetings attracted the smallest number of party

militants. Again, we must take into account that feminist activities appeal primarily to the one quarter of party militants who are women.

With the exception of demonstrations against nuclear power plants, several of which are being constructed in France near the Wallonian border and thus have increased the salience of this issue among Ecolo militants, the Flemish Agalev activists are, on average, more willing to participate in protest events, yet another sign that movements and ecology parties are more closely linked in Flanders where left-libertarian social mobilization is greater.

As a first step in our analysis, we explore how affiliation with movement organizations and participation in protest events are associated with each other. Both the zero-order correlations *among* organizational affiliations and *among* protest events as well as *between* organizations and events are very low.⁴ Surprisingly, being a member of an environmental, peace, or working-class group affects the probability of getting involved in thematically related protest events only marginally, if at all. Moreover, the participation in one type of movement group or protest event does not significantly affect the probability of contributing to another movement organization or protest event featuring a different political issue.

We draw two conclusions from the absence of strong linkages among movement organizations and protest events. First, group and protest involvement constitute loosely coupled, grid-type, heterogeneous patterns without clear clusters and hierarchies of political commitment. This interpretation is consistent with past studies of the intra- and interorganizational structure of new social movements emphasizing the loose horizontal linkages between them and the fluid character of internal participation (cf. Gerlach and Hine 1970; Oberschall 1980; Rucht 1984). Second, the weak linkages between protest events and group affiliations suggest that both tap different dimensions of political activism. We checked this proposition by a factor analysis of participation in movement organizations and protest events. As we expected, no powerful and clearly interpretable explanatory factors emerge from these calculations. After varimax rotation the first factor bears fairly close resemblance to a dimension for general willingness to enter movement organizations, while the second factor represents involvement in protest events. Only the third factor, with an eigenvalue of less than 1.40, links organizations and protest events belonging to a particular theme, women's groups and women's day activities. Thus, we are on fairly safe ground to conclude that affiliation with movement groups and participation in protest events represent different dimensions of left-libertarian activism.

Given the weak linkages among individual movement activities and the straightforward dimensionality of social movement activism, we have summarized our data by constructing three indices. Our first index sums up all organizational memberships *before* joining Agalev or Ecolo and adds a value of two for each office a militant has held in a movement group (table 6-5A). Officeholding must be weighed heavily because it indicates an extraordinary commitment to social movements, as well as an acceptance of formal organizational structure not shared by all left-libertarians. Our second index is constructed in analogy to the first but covers all of the militants' organizational affiliations at the time of answering our survey (table 6-5B). This index has already been employed in chapter 3 to construct the group of "lobbyists" and is here reproduced to highlight the consequences of joining Agalev or Ecolo for movement activism. In general, militants indicate that they are active members of more social movement groups after joining the party than before. There appears to be no simple trade-off between party membership and movement involvement.⁵ Our third index sums up all protest events attended by each party militant (table 6-5C). Overall, there are very few activists who did not participate in any movement events at all. Almost 38 percent showed very high commitment by appearing at least at three of the six protest events we had listed. The percentage of these militants is higher in Agalev than in Ecolo.

The militants' high involvement in social movement organizations and protest activism, even before joining Agalev and Ecolo, confirms the importance of movements as recruitment networks for ecology parties. At the same time it suggests that purposive motivations are very important for joining ecology parties. Affiliation with movement groups or protest events, moreover, may tap different dimensions of purposive involvement in the parties. In many instances participation in social movement groups also provided social incentives to join ecology parties. Thirty-five percent of Agalev's members and fifty-two percent of the Ecolo activists report they already had friends in the party at the time of their joining. This relatively high percentage, as well as the difference between the two parties, is explained by the linkage between the parties' precursor organization and later party membership. People who were friends in Friends of the Earth (Wallonia) and Anders Gaan Leven (Flanders) joined the new parties together.

In addition to purposive and social incentives, material rewards may be a lure for party membership. Given the militants' political background experiences, however, it is unlikely that material considerations played a significant role in the decision to join Agalev or Ecolo.

Table 6-5 Indices of Past and Present Movement Memberships and Participation in Protest Events

	Agalev	Ecolo	All
A. Past movement memberships (in percentages)			
Number of memberships			
0-1	32	42	35
2-3	34	30	32
4-5	21	19	20
6+	14	10	12
	101 ^a	101 ^a	99 ^a
	(<i>N</i> = 162)	(<i>N</i> = 94)	(<i>N</i> = 256)
B. Present movement memberships (in percentages)			
Number of memberships			
0-2	30	40	34
3-5	24	33	28
6-8	25	13	20
9+	21	14	18
	100	100	100
	(<i>N</i> = 156)	(<i>N</i> = 94)	(<i>N</i> = 250)
C. Participation in protest events (in percentages)			
Number of protest events			
0 low rate of participation	1	9	4
1	24	16	21
2	37	41	38
3	22	26	23
4	11	7	10
5	3	1	2
6 high rate of participation	3	0	2
	101 ^a	100	100
	(<i>N</i> = 161)	(<i>N</i> = 94)	(<i>N</i> = 255)

^aRounding error.

Social Movements and the Group Base of Ecological Politics

In chapter I we argued that ideologues are recruited into a party from a subculture of radical politics. Among the activists' political experiences, involvement in the student movement, past voting for parties of the left, and participation in protest events are the most likely candidates for a "radical track" into ecological politics. With respect to lobbyists we expect a much lesser involvement in leftist political activities but a great commitment to social movements. Since we employed adherence to social movement organizations at the time of our survey to *define* lobbyists, part of this proposition is trivial. We can explore, however, whether lobbyists were also more active in social movements *before* joining the party and in the parties' precursor organizations. Pragmatists, finally, should be less involved in movement organizations as well as in protest events. Less activism in left-libertarian movements also translates into a more moderate view of the left-libertarian policy agenda.

In figure 6-1 we have linked the militants' political background experiences outside the parties to their ideological position. Due to the relatively small size of each intraparty group, our data rarely reach satisfactory levels of statistical significance. Nevertheless, they exhibit some clear-cut trends consistent with our theoretical predictions. Pragmatists in both parties have been indeed less involved in social movement organizations, protest events, or the student movement and supported more conservative parties than ideologues and lobbyists. Yet, overall, pragmatists were very active in the parties' precursor organizations when compared to ideologues and, in Agalev, also to lobbyists. As expected, lobbyists were most committed to social movement organizations before and after joining ecology parties. Yet ideologues equal or exceed the lobbyists' participation in the student movement and are slightly more active in protest events.

Because the number of Agalev activists is larger than that of Ecolo militants, the relations between political orientation and social movement careers are more likely to be statistically significant than in Ecolo. Checking the magnitude of the associations, however, the differences between the two parties are fairly modest. Yet in Ecolo participation in the student movement and in the parties' precursor organization discriminates considerably more between pragmatists, lobbyists, and ideologues than in Agalev. In turn, Agalev subgroups are more sharply divided over involvement in protest events. Agalev ideologues have a much greater propensity to participate in protest events frequently than

Figure 6-1 Political Involvement Outside Party Activities and the Militants' Orientation in Ecological Politics
(in percentages)

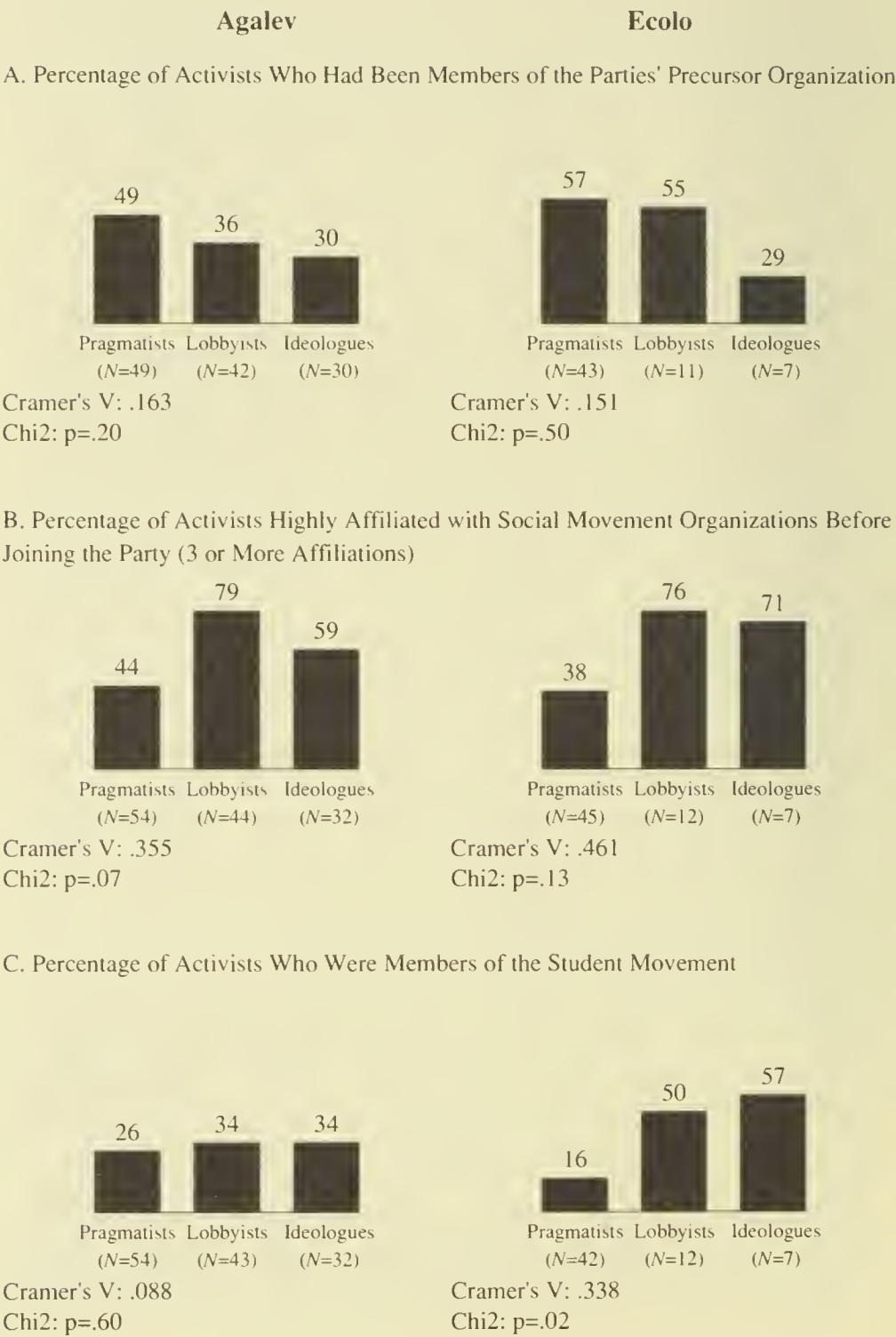
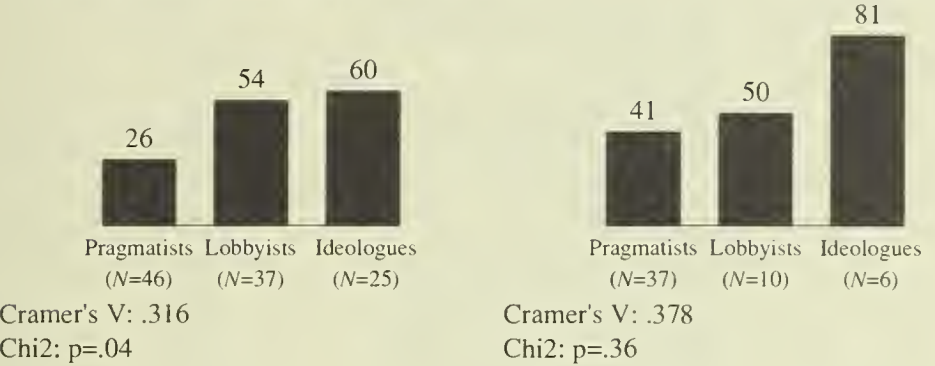
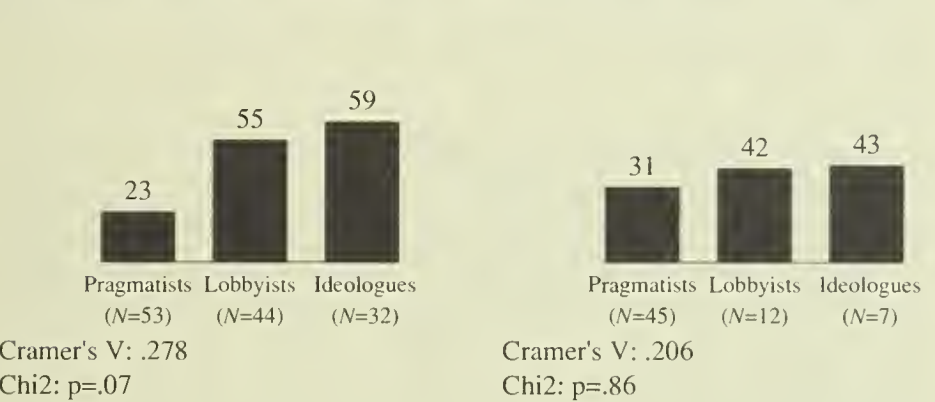


Figure 6-1 Continuation

D. Percentage of Activists Who Voted for Parties of the Left Before Supporting the Ecologists (Index Value of Left Voting: 8–10)



E. Percentage of Activists Who Often Participate in Protest Events (3 or more)



pragmatists, whereas the spread between intraparty groups is less pronounced in Ecolo.

Comparing intraparty differences of movement involvement in the two parties, Ecolo's internal divisions appear to have older origins, going back to the day of the student movement and the first efforts to organize ecological politics, than Agalev's, where more recent differences in protest involvement are the key discriminating factor. In Ecolo older rifts less often carry over into participation in protest events. We interpret this configuration as yet another sign that a lower mobilization of the left-libertarian cleavage in Wallonia is reflected in Ecolo's more limited differentiation of intraparty tendencies. There are many fewer

Table 6-6 Zero-Order Correlations among Extra-Party Political Activities (Pearson r 's)

	1	2
1. Education		
2. Secularization	+.12(*) (239)	
3. Participation in the student movement	+.19** (252)	+.13* (243)
4. Membership in party precursor organization	-.07 (236)	-.11 (228)
5. Past electoral support for leftist parties	+.13(*) (210)	+.34*** (202)
6. Index of past membership in movement organizations	+.05 (256)	-.10 (243)
7. Index of present membership in movement organizations	-.04 (254)	-.15(*) (242)
8. Index of participation in protest events	.00 (251)	+.19** (242)

(*) $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

ideologues in Ecolo and their recent behavior is less distinct from that of the other activists than in Agalev.

Given that militants' political career paths are linked to intraparty groups, it is not surprising that they are also associated with the militants' policy views, as defined by anticapitalism and postmodern deep ecology (see chapter 4). In both parties past leftist voting records contribute to more anticapitalist positions today ($r = +.19$; $p < .01$; $N = 212$) and to more endorsement of postmodern deep ecology ($r = +.38$; $p < .01$; $N = 212$). In both parties strong commitments to protest events correlate with more anticapitalism ($r = +.25$; $p < .001$; $N = 253$), whereas only Agalev protest involvement is significantly linked with deep ecology ($r = +.32$; $p < .001$; $N = 159$).

Political Career Patterns and Left-Libertarian Social Movements

We can now try to integrate our preliminary findings into a more sophisticated reconstruction of the militants' political biographies. We would like to answer three questions: (1) What is the relative weight of social

3	4	5	6	7
+.01 (239)				
+.36*** (214)	-.04 (198)			
+.13* (256)	+.22*** (239)	+.06 (214)		
+.10(*) (25)	+.21*** (238)	+.04 (213)	+.70*** (250)	
+.13* (242)	+.03 (238)	+.35*** (213)	+.26*** (250)	+.21*** (250)

background and political experiences for shaping militants’ ideological outlook in political parties? (2) Are political career tracks linked to our types of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists? (3) How does political context, the mobilization of the left-libertarian cleavage in Flanders and Wallonia, affect the political career patterns of Agalev and Ecolo activists?

Table 6-6 reports bivariate correlations among the activists’ cultural and political experiences and social movement activism before and after joining Agalev and Ecolo. For the moment we ignore differences between the two parties and focus on general patterns only. The variables are ordered according to the biographical sequence in which they are likely to have occurred. Among the social background variables we have included only education because it is the one variable that proves to exercise a significant direct influence on later patterns of political behavior. Even that influence, however, is limited to secularization (defined as the inverse value of church attendance), membership in the student movement, and past left voting.

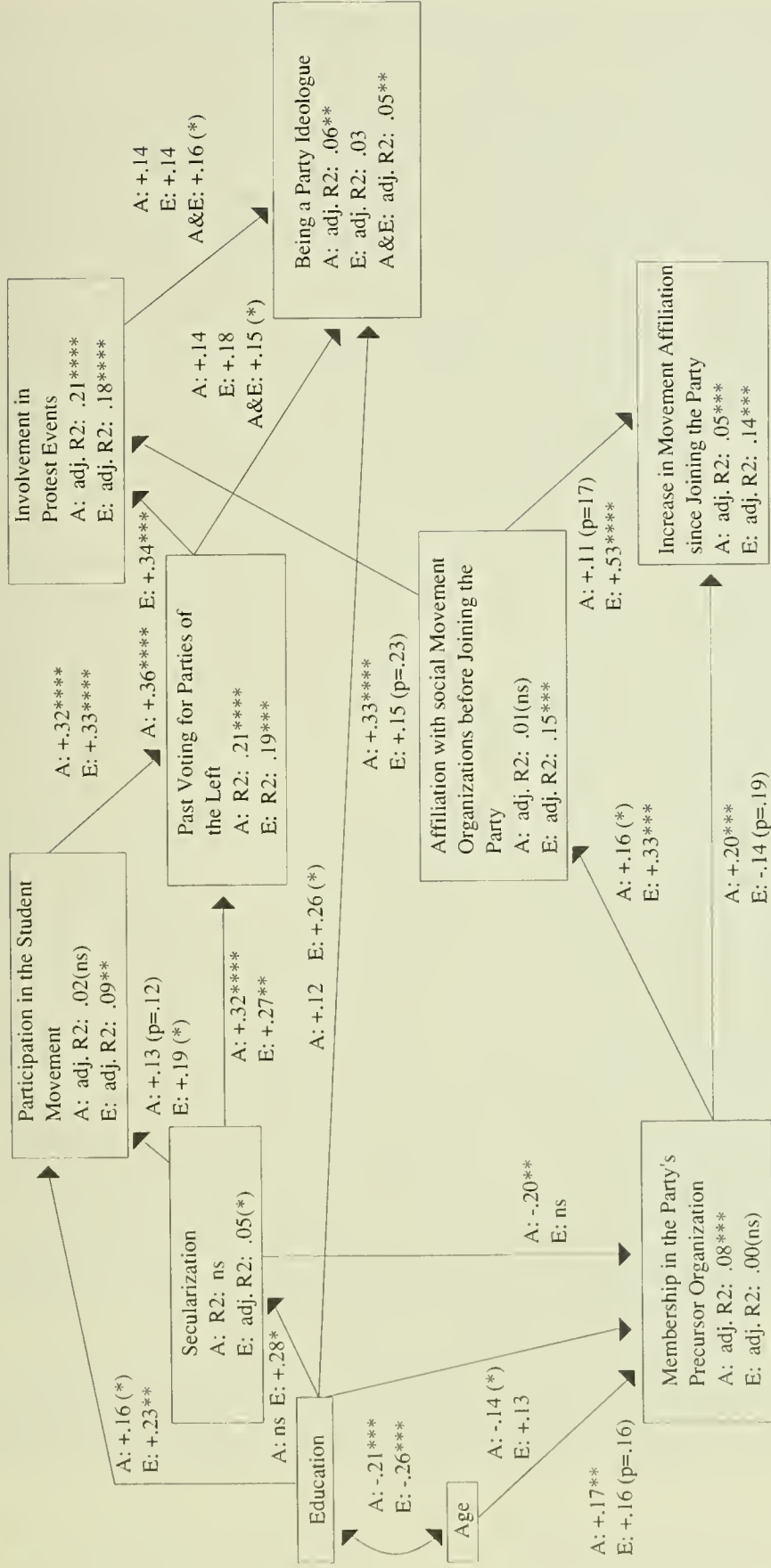
The three biographically earliest cultural and political practices—secularization, participation in the student movement, and membership

in the parties' precursor organization—are weakly linked to each other and to the activists' later careers in movement organizations and protest events. Yet secularization and affiliation with the student movement considerably increase past electoral support for left parties. Past electoral behavior, in turn, exhibits a strong relationship to protest events, yet no exceptional affiliation with movement organizations. The number of past and present ties to movement organizations is, however, increased by membership in the party's precursor organization and modestly affects political protest. While left party support explains more than 12 percent of the variance in protest events, past movement organization explains less than 7 percent, and, curiously enough, present movement organization little more than 4 percent. What emerges, then, is one cluster of variables linking secularization, student movement, left voting, and protest events and a second cluster combining membership in the parties' precursor organizations with past and present movement groups as well as more weakly with protest events. In the second cluster past and present organizational affiliations are highly interrelated.

We will now explore whether a path analysis reveals that these clusters combine into coherent political “career tracks” leading from social background conditions via initial political and cultural experiences to present political involvement and finally to the three types of intraparty activists. Since past and present movement organization are highly collinear, we have replaced present movement organization by the *change* in commitment to social movements that took place once militants joined ecology parties. This variable is defined as the difference between present and past movement activism. Our statistical models use linear ordinary least square estimation techniques, although the final dependent variables, types of party activists, are dummy variables. Yet log-linear equations which are more adequate for discrete dependent variables do not yield significantly different statistical results but are much more difficult to interpret.

Figure 6-2 represents our model for ideologues. Variables have been entered in the sequence in which they are most likely to have shaped the activists' present political outlook. Path coefficients and adjusted multiple correlations are given for Agalev and Ecolo separately, although the patterns of linkage are quite similar in the two parties. One difference between the parties is due to the religious character of Agalev's precursor organization Anders Gaan Leven. Membership in that organization is negatively linked to education and secularization, a pattern absent in Ecolo. Moreover, membership in Agalev's and Ecolo's precursor organization is linked in different ways to affiliation with social movement

Figure 6-2 Pathways of Political Experience among Agalev and Ecolo Party Militants and Political Orientation



(*) $p < .1$ *** $p < .01$ **** $p < .001$
 Pairwise deletion of missing data. Individual equations have between 184 and 239 cases.

organizations. Setting these relatively idiosyncratic differences aside, the structure of the militants' political experiences and career paths is quite similar in both parties.

Figure 6-2 reveals that the activists' socioeconomic and demographic background is a weak explanation of political behavior. Gender is not significantly connected to any aspect of militants' political involvement. The relationship between age and the parties' precursor organizations is trivial because people who were adults in the early to mid-seventies when these groups came into existence are clearly older than many of today's Agalev and Ecolo militants. Education significantly affects secularization and activism in the student movement but not leftist voting, social movement affiliation, and protest events. Yet education also affects the group formation in ecology parties directly. At least in Ecolo it is the strongest predictor of radical commitments to the camp of ideologues, when all other variables are held constant.

Otherwise, sociodemographic variables have no direct impact on past left voting, social movement affiliation, and protest behavior. Thus, background variables primarily exercise some modest influence on initial cultural and political commitments, such as religious practices, membership in the student movement, and the parties' precursor organizations, but lose independent weight in shaping the subsequent course of militants' political actions.

When we examine the activists' political experiences outside their parties, the linkages reappear that constitute a "leftist" track, from student movement via past leftist voting to high participation in protest events, and a "movement organizations" track, from parties' precursor organizations via past social movement organizations and increases in present movement activism. There are, however, some crossovers between the two tracks. At least in Ecolo membership in the student movement contributes to past movement affiliations. In both parties, but especially in Agalev, these affiliations, in turn, increase involvement in protest events, although leftist voting remains the strongest predictor of protest involvement. Thus, the path model confirms to a considerable extent the *two-dimensionality of commitments to left-libertarian social movements*. One set of activists gets primarily involved in protest events, another in movement organizations, with the latter still being more likely to engage in protest events than those who belong neither to the leftist nor to the movement organizations track.

We can translate these statistical associations into a more descriptive language. Thirty-seven percent of all Agalev and Ecolo activists have been involved in at least three protest events. But among former mem-

bers of the student movement and voters for the socialist or radical left parties, 64 percent have participated in three or more protest events. Only 22 percent of activists without these experiences, however, showed a similar level of protest engagement. Membership in the party's precursor organization and above-average social movement affiliation before joining the party increase social protest especially among Agalev militants, 61 percent of whom took part in at least three protest events. In Ecolo only 50 percent of activists with the same background engage in as many protest events. In Agalev strong affiliation with social movement organizations and past voting for the left increase high protest involvement by 27 percent beyond the proportion of all Agalev activists exhibiting such levels of activism, in Ecolo by 21 percent. Conversely, the absence of such background experiences depresses participation in protests by 21 percent in Agalev and 11 percent in Ecolo.

Agalev shows not only generally higher levels of engagement in social movements and protest events than Ecolo, but also a greater internal division of the party over protest behavior. Both phenomena are likely to be intraparty consequences of the fact that left-libertarian mobilization in Flanders is higher than in Wallonia. To reconstruct the micrologic explaining how differences in the parties' environment of social mobilization translate into internal divisions between the activists' political career paths, we must examine the linkage between biographical experiences and intraparty subgroups.

Affiliation with the ideologues, lobbyists, or pragmatists in the parties is indeed systematically linked to political biographies. Figure 6-2 demonstrates that there is a slight but consistent association between being an ideologue and having higher education, a record of voting for leftist parties, and greater commitment to protest politics than other activists. Both parties show similar patterns and the relations are statistically significant if we pool our samples. Lobbyists and pragmatists, conversely, have very different career paths in both parties, as regression equations in table 6-7 show.⁶ Given our definition of lobbyism, one would expect lobbyists to be much more affiliated with past and present social movement organizations than other activists. In Agalev past leftist voting significantly contributes to lobbyism, indicating an overall greater radicalism among this party's lobbyists than in Ecolo. Protest involvement, however, has no independent impact on lobbyism.

Finally, pragmatists represent almost a mirror image of the ideologues. They have lower education, have voted more for conservative parties in the past and, at least in Agalev, have been less likely to participate in protest activism. In both parties membership in the parties'

Table 6-7 Lobbyists' and Pragmatists' Pathways into Ecology Parties

	Agalev		Ecolo	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
A. Lobbyists				
Past leftist voting	+.05	+.19*	.00	+.02
Past affiliation with movement organizations	+.07	+.39***	+.06	+.42***
Increase in movement affiliation since joining the party	+.04	+.30***	+.03	+.23***
Adjusted R ²	.24*** (N = 123)		.26*** (N = 73)	
B. Pragmatists				
Education	-.11	-.18*	-.24	-.37***
Membership in the party's precursor organization	+.19	+.19*	+.15	+.15 (p = .22)
Past leftist voting	-.04	-.17(*)	-.04	-.17 (p = .17)
Involvement in protest events	-.06	-.21*	-.01	-.02
Adjusted R ²	.15*** (N = 122)		.15** (N = 78)	

(*) $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

precursor organizations enhances pragmatic dispositions. As our historical reconstruction of Agalev suggested, a more radical breed of people committed to movement organizations and protest joined the party once it had dissociated itself from its precursor organization. In Ecolo, in contrast, a greater continuity of the “old guard” and a smaller proportion of new and more radical militants explain why members of the parties’ precursor organization are only slightly more pragmatic than all others. Moreover, Ecolo’s recruitment history and the generally more subdued protest involvement in Wallonia accounts for the absence of a stronger negative relationship between protest activity and pragmatism.

Our analysis of the militants’ career tracks thus permits us to propose the following micrologic linking left-libertarian mobilization in the parties’ social environment to intraparty group formation. Higher left-libertarian mobilization offers more opportunities to engage in radical, disruptive forms of protest activism. Participants in such events are likely to join ecology parties and strengthen the radical group of ideo-

logues. Where the left-libertarian cleavage is more mobilized and ideologies constitute a larger intraparty group, we find more distinctive coherent career paths among the activists. Political careers, against a background of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization, thus explain why ideologues are more prominent in Agalev than in Ecolo.

Conclusion

We can now return to the three questions we posed at the beginning of the last subsection and summarize three significant findings of our analysis in this chapter. First, we have shown that different aspects of the activists' political experiences outside the parties are systematically linked to each other and to their ideological predispositions. The militants' political careers provide a first step to explaining the bases and dynamics of group formation in Agalev and Ecolo. The patterns we found demonstrate that the phenomenon of left-libertarian politics is more varied than those investigations of "new social movements" and "new politics" parties suggest, which focus on the coherence of their class base or the postmaterialist values of the individual participants. In particular we must distinguish between (1) activists who are mostly inclined to involvement in protest events, (2) militants with strong ties to movement organizations, but somewhat lesser readiness for protest, and (3) individuals who join left-libertarian parties but are not highly involved in the social mobilization of the new cleavage at all.

Second, we are now in a position to compare the relative merit of "sociological" and "political career" explanations of types of activists in ecology parties. Sociological explanations of left-libertarian politics may help to identify the clientele and the activists of ecology parties (chapter 5) in general, yet they are not very useful to reconstruct the political careers and ideological outlooks of party militants. The one exception to this generalization is education, which has a consistent and moderately strong impact on political behavior. In a modest way our finding reinforces the conclusion drawn in many studies of political participation in the general population that organizational experience and political attention are as good or better predictors of political participation than social and political resources.⁷ As Agalev and Ecolo militants show, not just a dispositional susceptibility, but actual exposure to political processes and direct interaction with people in movement organizations and protest events create a willingness to engage in new political practices and take a political stance inside parties.⁸ In this sense, biographic studies of militants' political involvement also ad-

dress motivations to join political parties from a new perspective. Rather than building on the militants' unreliable (and sometimes insincere) personal recollections, we can interpret motivations to join and work in parties in light of the fabric of ties and experiences that led militants into a party.

Third, we have identified patterns of variation between Agalev and Ecolo that can be interpreted in terms of the differential levels of left-libertarian cleavage mobilization in Flanders and Wallonia. In the main, political context affects the aggregate distribution of key variables. In Flanders, where left-libertarian mobilization is greater, militants are generally more involved in movement organizations and protest than in Ecolo. In the analysis of individual-level relations between militants' background, career paths, and adherence to an intraparty group, however, similarities prevailed. In both parties ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists have similar distinct background experiences. The different relative size of Agalev's and Ecolo's three groups of activists, then, is due to the fact that Agalev, in an environment of greater left-libertarian mobilization, recruits more militants who are predisposed to become ideologues or lobbyists. This, in turn, is reflected in the higher aggregate level of social movement activism in Agalev, as well as in the sometimes sharper contrasts that appear between Agalev's groups of activists.

Our next task is to relate party groups to individual level and contextual variations in the parties' internal participation, power structure, and process of policymaking. Group differences among party activists are only interesting if they also translate into different patterns of political behavior which, in turn, may affect the parties' strategies to attract voters and build alliances.

7 Participation and Power in the Party Organization

In party statutes and programmatic declarations Agalev and Ecolo have attacked what they believe are hierarchical and undemocratic structures inside the established Belgian liberal, Christian, and socialist parties. All over Europe left-libertarian parties try to set themselves apart from conventional mass or cadre parties by implementing an open, participatory decisionmaking process that, in principle, allows all party members to become involved. Vigorous rank-and-file participation, so it is argued, will shift the power of decisionmaking from the top of the party to the bottom and limit the tasks of the formal leadership to the implementation of important collective decisions concerning the parties' policy programs, strategies, and selection of public representatives.

Although formal rights to political participation are an important

force shaping the power distribution in an organization or society, power and participation are not identical (Alford and Friedland 1975; Gamson 1975). Frequently participation does not translate into power (“co-optation”), or power is exercised without requiring the explicit participation of the actors and institutions whose interests are served (“non-decisionmaking”). For this reason we will use participation as only one indicator of power relations and study intraparty power relations with three additional approaches. First, the distribution of resources and the authority of formal positions reveals elements of organizational power structures. Second, clinical studies of actual decisionmaking processes furnish important insights into the power relations of a party. Finally, participants attribute a power reputation to party organs and individuals that is worth taking into account because the actual exercise of power does not always surface in overt decisions and formal organizational arrangements.

Theories of political power are not only a primary concern for social theorists but are employed by political activists themselves to interpret the circumstances and consequences of their actions. In the history of European political parties Michels’s oligarchy theory has been a cognitive framework for understanding the reality of power in political parties and has enjoyed particular popularity among party activists. The ecologists are no exception and, indeed, Michels’s theory is widely discussed within the parties.¹ We will therefore give militants an opportunity to assess the adequacy of Michels’s theory for understanding the distribution of power in the Belgian ecology parties.

Research on party power structures generally explores whether parties approximate one of the following three ideal types. (1) Parties are *democratic* if they allow for a broad scope and open structure of participation, distribute resources and positional advantages relatively equally among party militants, and develop the reputation to disperse power and the ability to influence decisions among a wide range of actors and party organs. (2) *Oligarchical* parties are the mirror image of democratic parties. They are characterized by a narrow scope and a rigid structure of participation, a centralization of power resources, and a reputation that few individuals are influential.² (3) More recently, pluralist political theory has suggested a third model of power distribution in parties, the *stratarchy* (Eldersveld 1964). In a stratarchy participation may be broad but stratified by different territorial levels and organs of the party organization, each of which enjoys relatively great autonomy over its internal affairs and policies. Resources and positional advantages are not equally distributed but held by contending power centers in a loosely coupled

network of party organs. Hence, in stratarchies the reputation to be powerful is distributed among activists and party organs along a less steep slope than in oligarchies, yet not along a slope as flat as in the democratic model.

Democracy, stratarchy, and oligarchy are relative concepts. For all practical purposes they can be empirically identified only in comparative terms as “more” or “less” power concentration and democratic openness. Unfortunately, most studies of power distributions lack a comparative dimension and treat oligarchy or democracy as concepts that can be measured metrically on an absolute scale. Moreover, there are few studies employing the same empirical methods of power analysis across several political parties.³ These handicaps make it difficult to compare with any degree of certainty which parties have more or less democratic, stratarchal, or oligarchical power structures. In our study we employ the same indicators of participation and power distribution in Agalev and Ecolo, enabling us to compare power structures quite rigorously in at least two cases. If our basic hypothesis is correct that the degree of left-libertarian cleavage is mobilized in a party’s environment, Agalev and Ecolo should exhibit systematic differences in their internal power structures. Because left-libertarian movements and protest activities are more pronounced in Flanders and, as we already know, more radical left-libertarian ideologues enter Agalev, we would expect that Agalev has a more democratic party organization than Ecolo, which draws on a more limited pool of movement activists in a political environment characterized by less left-libertarian mobilization.

Patterns of Participation

Patterns of participation can contribute in three ways to the analysis of power structures in political parties. First, we will analyze the *scope* of participation in party affairs. Presumably, democratic parties should involve a wide range of voters and party members in their internal decisionmaking process. Second, we will examine the *structure* of participation, or the interrelation between different arenas of activism in political parties. Is the involvement in different party organs mutually reinforcing or are there trade-offs? Is there a small group of militants who are most active in all relevant party organs or is participation more dispersed? Third, we will explore the *orientation and political demands* of participants at different levels of party organization by linking the activists’ political background and their ideological dispositions to patterns of participation. This aspect of our analysis is particularly impor-

tant because it examines hypotheses about the link between the parties' patterns of participation and their internal group structures. Thus, it establishes a tie between the *procedural* and the *substantive* dimension of power relations: do patterns of participation affect the programs and strategies pursued by a party?

The Scope of Party Activism

Between 1980 and 1985 enrollment in Agalev and Ecolo oscillated around 1,000 members in each party. Usually before and shortly after elections membership increased, whereas it tended to erode in the intermittent periods. Overall, membership turnover appeared to be high in both parties, somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 to 30 percent of all members each year. Yet it is likely that activists had a somewhat slower turnover than inactive members (cf. Kitschelt 1989a: chap. 4). Among the Agalev and Ecolo conference participants we surveyed, 37 percent had joined their party before November 1981 when the ecologists entered the Belgian parliament for the first time. Another 31 percent joined between November 1981 and the local elections in the fall of 1982. The remaining 31 percent came to the parties between then and our survey in 1985. In Agalev, however, there are significantly fewer "old" pre-1981 members than in Ecolo (32 to 46 percent). Conversely, Agalev attracts more recent joiners to its conferences than Ecolo (32 to 23 percent).

This contrast reflects a different dynamic of membership development and activism in the two parties. In Wallonia, with a less mobilized social movement sector and essentially stagnant electoral support for the left-libertarian party, Ecolo was less able to increase its stock of participants beyond an "old guard" of party founders. Agalev's growing electoral support, against a backdrop of greater mobilization of left-libertarian movements, made it easier to attract new militants.⁴ We can relate these differences to a number of other features characterizing the scope of activism in Agalev and Ecolo: the role personal networks played in mobilizing new party members, the overall number and ratio of activists, and the average intensity of participation in each party.

In recruiting militants Ecolo has built on a more tightly knit personal network of contacts and acquaintances than Agalev. Over half of the Ecolo activists had party members as friends before they joined the party themselves. The same is true for only a third of Agalev's militants. These generally high ratios show that, in addition to purposive motivations, which are evidenced in the militants' involvement in social movement organizations or protest events before joining the parties, friends

and personal contacts may have made a difference for party affiliation (see also chapter 6 above).⁵ Moreover, there may be a trade-off between personal and purposive motivations: in Agalev a higher mobilization of social and purposive motivations; in Ecolo a higher mobilization of purposive motivations, whereas in Ecolo personal networks were more vital in attracting party members.

Measures of the scope of participation in political parties are member-voter and member-activist ratios. In most conventional European parties the member-voter ratio today varies between 5 and 25 percent. In Belgium in 1982 the organization rates of the major conventional parties ranged from 9.7 percent for the liberals and 10.5 percent for the Christian democrats to 19 percent for the socialist parties (Dewachter 1987: 315). Although Agalev and Ecolo appealed to close to 400,000 Belgian voters in the 1985 national election, they had a member-voter ratio of only 0.5 percent, compared to an average of 12 percent for the other major Belgian parties. Low member-voter ratios in Agalev and Ecolo are less related to the parties' recent origin than the distaste of left-libertarian sympathizers for joining formal organizations, even if they are ecology parties.⁶ For this reason the parties' member-voter ratio has not gradually increased, as the parties aged and learned to appeal to their electoral constituencies.

In conventional European parties between 20 and 35 percent of the members, or the equivalent of 1 to 5 percent of the parties' voters, regularly participate in party events. In Belgium the actual figure is likely to be close to the lower bound of this estimate.⁷ In ecology parties a higher level of activism could partially compensate for the low enrollment and bring the activist-voter ratio closer to the range of the other parties. Agalev and Ecolo militants were asked to indicate the percentage of activists belonging to their local section who attended the party conference at which the survey was carried out. Since local groups have only between five and thirty activists, we assume that the militants' answers to this question are rather reliable. Based on the ratio between conference attendants and other local activists, we can estimate the overall number of activists in Agalev and Ecolo. For instance, each of the militants who reported that one-third of the activists in his local group attended the conference stands for three activists in the party. Using this estimation procedure for all responses, we arrive at a total of about 630 to 770 activists in both parties together, representing 32 to 38 percent of all party members and about 0.2 percent of their voters. At the preelection party conferences between one half and two thirds of all activists, one fifth of all members, and 0.1 percent of all Agalev and

Table 7-1 Voters, Membership, and Activism in Ecology Parties

	Agalev	Ecolo	Total
Voters in October 1985 election	227,776	156,465	384,241
Party members	about 1,000	about 1,000	about 2,000
as percentage of voters	0.44	0.64	0.52
Party activists	350–450	280–320	630–770
as percentage of voters	0.15–0.20	0.18–0.20	0.17–0.20
as percentage of members	35–45	28–32	32–38
Conference participants	about 250	about 150	about 400
as percentage of voters	0.11	0.09	0.10
as percentage of members	25	15	20
as percentage of activists	55–71	47–53	52–63

Ecolo voters were present (table 7-1). Even if our estimation procedure may understate participation in both parties to a certain extent, our data are sufficiently robust to warrant the following conclusion. Ecology parties attract a much lower ratio of voters to become active in the parties than their conventional socialist, liberal, or Christian democratic competitors (0.2–0.3 versus 1–2 percent of the electorate as activists). Among party members, however, activism in ecology parties is higher than in their competitors.

Agalev has a somewhat lower degree of organization than Ecolo but a higher level of activism and an even higher ratio of activists who attend the conferences. Thus, on the whole, Agalev mobilizes a slightly higher percentage of its voters as activists, a tendency that has apparently become stronger since the mid-1980s when we made our survey. This may be yet another indication that Agalev is the more participatory and vibrant of the two parties, an assessment that is also confirmed by the militants' preparation of the 1985 party conferences (table 7-2). In Agalev a quarter of the activists recall that their local sections discussed in detail the voluminous election programs on which the conferences were to decide. In Ecolo this is true for only 11 percent of the locals. Moreover, Agalev conference participants spent an average of about six hours preparing the conference proceedings, whereas Ecolo militants invested less than four hours. Agalev not only attracts more activists to its conference but also involves party members more intensely in its political debates than Ecolo.

Reviewing the overall scope of participation in Agalev and Ecolo, there is little evidence that the ecology parties have contributed to a

Table 7-2 Preparation of the Conference Deliberations (in percentages)

	Agalev	Ecolo	Total
A. The agenda and proposal submitted to the conference were discussed in the local party group . . .			
In detail	24	11	19
Not so detailed	27	26	27
Hardly at all	50	63	54
Total	101 ^a (<i>N</i> = 147)	100 (<i>N</i> = 76)	100 (<i>N</i> = 223)
B. Activists spent individual preparation time for the conference . . .			
None to two hours	32	41	36
Three to four hours	23	35	28
Five to six hours	18	13	16
Seven to ten hours	17	5	12
More than ten hours	10	7	9
Total	100 (<i>N</i> = 134)	101 ^a (<i>N</i> = 86)	101 ^a (<i>N</i> = 220)

^aRounding error.

broad democratization of Belgian political life. Only a tiny fraction of their electorates actually gets involved in the parties. Among party members, however, the participation ratio is somewhat higher than in conventional parties. Those who do join ecology parties take a more direct interest in their decisions than the average member of conventional parties. Levels of participation are also significantly higher in Agalev than in Ecolo. These differences can be understood in terms of the mobilization of left-libertarian politics in Flanders and Wallonia.

The Structure of Participation

A sharper picture of activism in Agalev and Ecolo emerges when we examine the profile and distribution of participation in different party organs. Although the statutes provide that all party meetings are public, militants take advantage of these opportunities to a widely varying

Table 7-3 Patterns of Participation in Local and National Party Affairs
(in percentages)

		Local participation	
		High ^a	Low ^b
National participation	High ^a	“Cosmopolitans”	“Pure Nationals”
		Total: 33 (84) ^c	Total: 4 (11)
		Agalev: 30 (51)	Agalev: 4 (5)
		Ecolo: 35 (33)	Ecolo: 6 (6)
	Low ^b	“Localists”	“Marginals”
		Total: 47 (121)	Total: 15 (39)
		Agalev: 52 (84)	Agalev: 14 (21)
		Ecolo: 40 (37)	Ecolo: 19 (18)

^aValues 3 and 4 on a four-point scale.

^bValues 1 and 2 on a four-point scale.

^cValues in parentheses represent number of respondents.

extent. We asked militants to rate their involvement in the local and national affairs of their party on a four-point scale. Dichotomizing the answers into high and low participation rates yields table 7-3. Overall, one-third of all respondents say they are cosmopolitan “all-round activists” who are highly involved both in local and national party affairs. All-round activism probably represents the ideal of participatory politics ecology parties try to realize. Close to one-half of the militants, however, declares that they are highly committed only to local politics. Although our sample may underrepresent these “localists” to some extent (see chapter 1), they still constitute a relative majority of activists at the party conferences. A third group, representing about one-sixth of those who attend the conferences, are “marginals” who participate weakly in all party affairs. Finally, the smallest fraction of militants are pure “nationals” with national but no local commitments.⁸

In Agalev the core group of “all-round activists” is numerically larger than in Ecolo but represents a somewhat lower proportion of activists. Agalev also has absolutely and relatively more “localists” among militants attending the conference. Conversely, more of Ecolo’s militants are “marginals” or pure “nationals.” Consistent with our previous interpretations, Agalev’s absolute level and relative intensity of participation is somewhat higher than Ecolo’s.

In a further survey item militants reported the balance they strike between involvement in party work or social movements (table 7-4). A

Table 7-4 Political Activism More in the Party or in Social Movements^a (in percentages)

	Mostly in Agalev or Ecolo	About equally in party or social movement	Mostly in the social movements	
Agalev	48	39	13	(<i>N</i> = 162)
Ecolo	62	31	8	(<i>N</i> = 94)
Total	53	36	11	(<i>N</i> = 256)

^aValues were collapsed into three categories.

majority is much more active in the parties, but, due to the Agalev militants' higher involvement in movement organizations and protest events (cf. chapter 6), Agalev's respondents put more emphasis on movements than Ecolo's. In both parties those who work more in social movements are less active in the parties' internal local and national affairs ($r = -.23^*$ and $r = -.19^*$). Many left-libertarians have worried that engagement in ecology parties may “drain” movement activism, even though many expect protest movements to be more important than the parties for the future of left-libertarian politics. At least among party militants there is a slight trade-off between commitments to party or movement work. As we have argued in chapter 6, however, one must keep in mind that party members represent only a small fraction of the citizens participating in left-libertarian movements. Hence there is little reason to believe that the ecology parties have “absorbed” the protest movements.

In order to analyze patterns of intraparty involvement in greater detail, we asked militants to rate their involvement in five organs of party politics, beginning with the grass-roots level (local party sections) and moving up to the meetings of party executives. All meetings are open to party members, yet participation sharply declines as one progresses from the local to the national organizational level. Tables 7-3 and 7-5 demonstrate the same structural asymmetry: while almost all nationally active militants (in steering committees and party executives) appear to be also involved in local party affairs (local sections, regional assemblies), a relative majority of militants are almost exclusively concerned with the local level.

The two columns in table 7-5B calculate the differences between militants who are moderately to highly involved and those who are little

Table 7-5 The Militants' Participation in the Work of Different Party Organs (*N* = 255) (in percentages)

A. Overall participation scores

	Always (5)	Mostly (4)	Regularly (3)	Sometimes (2)	Rarely (1)	
Local party sections	68	11	11	4	6	100
Regional assemblies	38	23	9	16	15	101 ^b
National party conference	32	20	16	12	20	100
Party steering committees	12	6	8	18	56	100
Party executives	6	2	1	7	84	100

B. Difference between high and low participation^a

	Agalev	Ecolo
Local party sections	+78	+59
Regional assemblies	+24	+41
National party conference	+26	+10
Party steering committees	-61	-48
Party executives	-87	-78

^aPercentage of respondents attending a party organ “always” or “mostly” minus percentage of respondents who attend the organ only “sometimes” or “rarely.”

^bRounding error.

involved in a party organ for each party separately. Both parties have a fairly similar profile, yet Agalev militants are somewhat more involved in their local party sections and particularly in national party conferences than their Ecolo colleagues. Conversely, in Ecolo not the absolute number but the relative share of militants who are highly involved in steering committees and party executives is slightly higher. This difference reflects not so much greater participation in Ecolo’s peak decision-making bodies as the generally lower rank-and-file attendance of party

Table 7-6 The Structure of National Party Activism in Agalev and Ecolo

	Involvement in national party affairs					
	Agalev		Ecolo		All	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Overall local activism	+.28	+.21**	+.21	+.18(*)	+.24	+.19***
Local group involvement	-.15	-.15(*)	-.07	-.11	-.13	-.15**
Regional group activism	+.03	+.04	-.02	-.02	+.02	+.03
National conferences	+.13	+.19**	+.24	+.36***	+.15	+.23***
Steering committees	+.29	+.41***	+.07	+.10	+.21	+.30***
Party executives	+.16	+.16*	+.39	+.48***	+.27	+.29***
Adjusted R ²	.48***		.57***		.51***	
N	149		88		237	

(*) $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

conferences, which increases the relative share of officeholders in our sample.

The profile of participation should allay some worries that our sample is not representative for the entire pool of activists in Agalev and Ecolo. Although we could not interview activists staying away from the 1985 preelection conferences, the high percentage of only locally active militants and the fact that 32 percent of the militants indicate they attend national congresses only “sometimes” or “rarely” is enough to support our claim that the survey covers a broad, if not complete, spectrum of Agalev and Ecolo party activists.

We are now ready to analyze the stratification of participation in Agalev and Ecolo. The dimension that discriminates most clearly among militants is national party activism. We may gain an insight into intra-party power relations by analyzing the typical participatory commitments that are correlated with high levels of national party involvement. In particular we can explore the extent to which participation in party organs discriminates among levels of national participation. The greater the proportion of variance in national activism that is explained by involvement in one or two exclusive party organs, the greater is the centralization and concentration of national participation around a small core group of activists.

In table 7-6 we have regressed overall local activism as well as the five

specific types of party involvement listed in table 7-5 on national activism. The overall model explains 51 percent of the variance. As one would expect, the first three independent variables relating to local and regional activism do not discriminate much among levels of national activism. The most powerful reinforcements of national activism are participation in party conferences, national steering committees, and party executives.

Separate regressions for Agalev and Ecolo reveal different patterns of national participation. In Ecolo a relatively smaller proportion of activists regularly participates in party conferences than in Agalev (see table 7-5). This smaller circle is also much more involved in national party affairs, whereas Agalev conference attendance is more broadly distributed among activists with different intensities of national party involvement. Moreover, participation in the most exclusive party organ in Ecolo, the executive, makes the greatest difference for levels of national party activism. In Agalev the more broadly based steering committee, rather than the party executive, is the only powerful predictor of national participation.

Based on these configurations among types of political involvement in both parties, we conclude that Ecolo has a significantly more concentrated structure of participation than Agalev. This difference, in fact, may be indicative of variations between the parties' power structures. Agalev mobilizes generally more activists and has a somewhat flatter, more pluralist power structure and distribution of political participation. Ecolo, in contrast, involves fewer militants, and among them the vertical stratification of national activism is considerably steeper.

Political Experience, Participation, and Ideological Predispositions

Asymmetries of participation and involvement in parties are politically relevant for a party's program and strategy if there is a linkage between the militants' political experiences and views, on the one hand, and their access to specific party arenas, on the other. We can explore this linkage by relating the militants' profile of intraparty activism to their ideological preferences and political biography. As we argued in chapter 1, we expect ideologues to prefer national party activities, lobbyists to be more involved in extraparty affairs, and pragmatists to be primarily inclined toward local politics. Also political experiences should be linked to patterns of party involvement. Since ideologues are most committed to protest events (chapter 6), we also expect national party militants to be

Table 7-7 Political Careers and Extraparty Experiences of National Party Activists

	Agalev		Ecolo	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Membership in party precursor organization	+ .33	+ .16(*)	+ .58	+ .28**
Membership in the student movement	+ .09	+ .04	+ .63	+ .28**
Past left voting	.00	.00	+ .07	+ .14
Affiliation with social movements before joining party	+ .02	+ .05	+ .02	+ .05
Increase of movement affiliation since joining the party	.00	.00	+ .01	+ .03
Involvement in protest events	+ .28	+ .34***	+ .09	+ .10
Adjust R ²	.12**		.24***	
N	123		77	

(*) $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

more active in protest events. Conversely, the fact that pragmatists are least involved in social movements and protest events should also be reflected in a negative correlation between localism in ecology parties and protest events. Finally, since lobbyists are more inclined to movement organizations that may require much time and attention, it is likely that individuals with a high commitment to movements are relatively less involved in party affairs.

Our theoretical expectations are only partially confirmed when we examine the relationship between militants' political experiences outside Agalev and Ecolo and national party involvement (table 7-7). Only in Agalev is participation in protest events significantly linked to national party involvement. This suggests that "radicals" indeed are more likely to focus on national politics than more moderate party militants. In addition, however, militants who were more involved in the party's precursor organization have some propensity to contribute to national party affairs. In chapter 6 this group has been found to have moderate political tendencies. Thus, in Agalev, national party politics attracts a variety of activists.

In Ecolo protest involvement makes no statistically significant contribution to national activism, although the sign of the coefficient is consis-

Table 7-8 Political Careers and Extraparty Experiences of Localists and Militants More Active in Social Movements Than Party Affairs (All Militants)

	Localists		More active in movements than party	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Membership in party precursor organization	-.30	-.13(*)	-.38	-.13*
Membership in the student movement	+.12	+.05	-.24	-.08
Past left voting	-.06	-.10	+.02	+.03
Affiliation with social movements before joining party	+.05	+.11	+.14	+.25***
Increase of movement affiliation since joining the party	.00	.01	+.14	+.32***
Involvement in protest events	-.31	-.33***	-.06	-.05
Adjusted R ²	.11***		.17***	
N	196		191	

(*) $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

tent with our argument. Relatively “early” political experiences (membership in Ecolo’s precursor organization Friends of the Earth or in the student movement) have the greatest impact on national activism. Again, it is Ecolo’s “old guard” of party founders that emerges as the most nationally involved and maybe most powerful group. Agalev’s “old guard,” in contrast, is much less distinct and has more national competition from militants who are highly committed to protest politics. These differences reinforce our hypothesis that Ecolo has a more centralized power structure than Agalev. It is also in agreement with our proposition that the differential mobilization of the left-libertarian cleavage in Flanders and Wallonia leaves its mark on internal party politics.

Political experiences that contribute to a “localist” or a “movementist” orientation of militants are the same in both parties. For this reason we do not present separate equations for each party (cf. table 7-8). Since most national activists are also locally active, we must redefine the variable local party involvement so as to isolate militants with exclu-

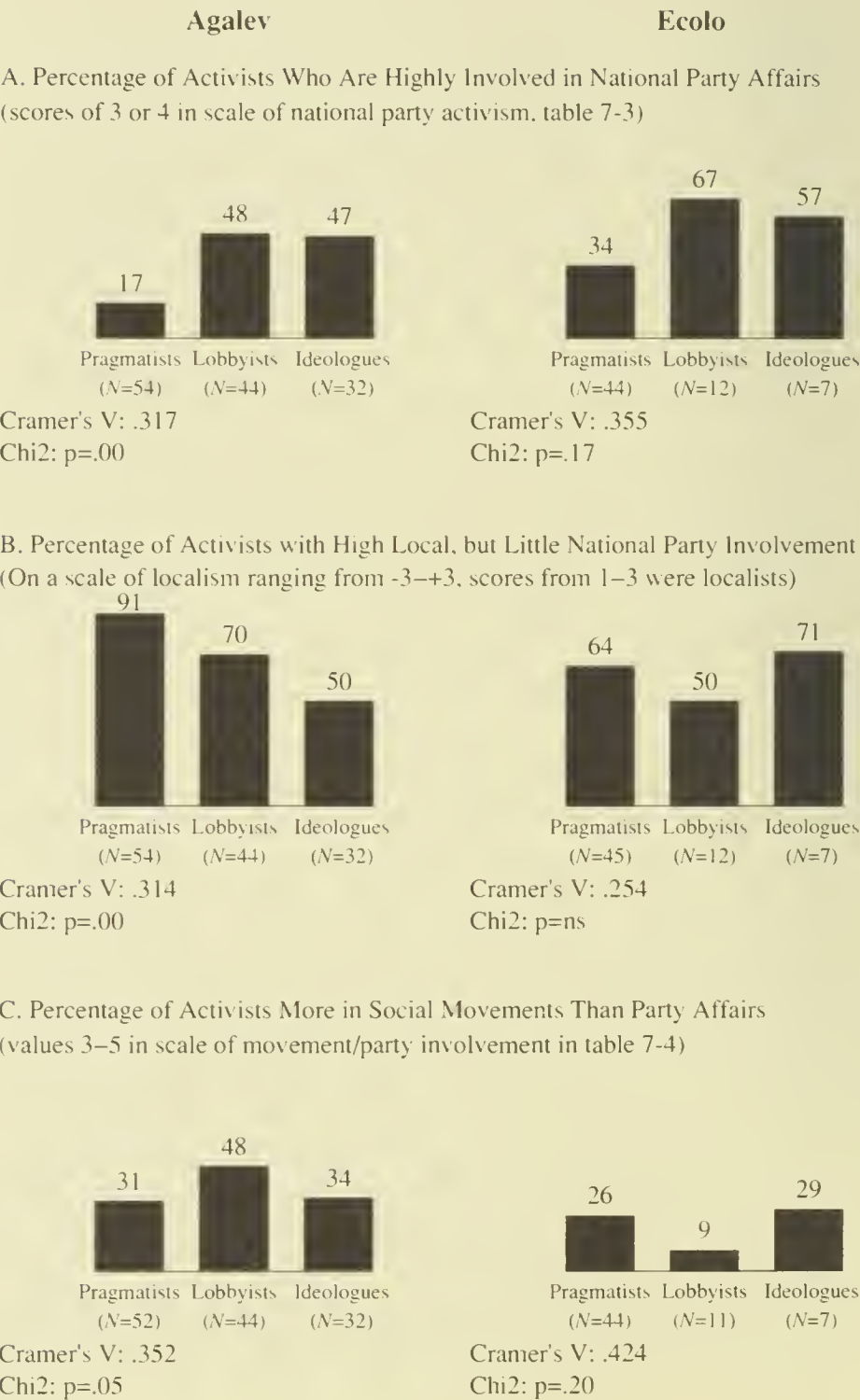
sively local party commitments. We have measured “localism” as the difference between the values of local and national activism reported in table 7-2. A positive value indicates greater local than national activism (maximum: +3), a negative value the reverse (minimum: -3). According to the equation in table 7-8, localists are significantly less willing to engage in protest events than the average militant, a finding consistent with our expectation. Also militants who work more in social movements than parties are not exceptionally enthusiastic about political protest but are much more closely affiliated with movement organizations than all other activists. Both “localists” and “movementists” were slightly less frequent members of the parties’ precursor organizations. Compared to the national party activists, the background experiences of “localists” and “movementists” clearly place them more at the periphery of the parties.

If participation in movement protest events discriminates among arenas of intraparty involvement, then it is also likely that ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists are active in different party affairs. At least in Agalev radical ideologues with high protest commitment may be over-represented among national party activists. In Ecolo ideologues are less likely to be nationally more active because the party is dominated by an “old guard” of party founders. Moreover, the small percentage of lobbyists and ideologues in Ecolo makes it generally harder to identify consistent and statistically significant patterns than in Agalev.

In figure 7-1 we show the percentage of pragmatists, lobbyists, and ideologues who are above-average involved in national party activism, localism, or movements rather than party affairs. In both parties for pragmatists our findings are consistent with theoretical expectations. They are less active in national party affairs, more localist, and devote relatively more time to party than movement work. Also Agalev’s ideologues conform to theoretical predictions. Their behavior is a mirror image of pragmatists. Ideologues indeed are the nationally most active group but are less involved in local party affairs or social movement organizations. In Ecolo, however, ideologues are more localist than pragmatists. Given Ecolo’s small number of ideologues and the lack of statistically significant relations, this finding may be attributable to chance. Alternatively, we may speculate that the dominance of a pragmatic elite in Ecolo’s national arena has pushed the ideologues into local party affairs, such as the Brussels section of the party.

With respect to lobbyists figure 7-1 yields a consistent pattern for Agalev and an inconsistent one for Ecolo. In Agalev lobbyists are more

Figure 7-1 Patterns of Party Activism and Political Orientation in Ecological Politics
(in percentages)



nationally but less locally active than pragmatists and, in these respects, resemble ideologues. In contrast to both ideologues and pragmatists, however, they devote relatively more time to movement affairs. In Ecolo our theory correctly predicts the local participation of lobbyists. It is also marginally consistent with the lobbyists' high national activism. It is more difficult to see why lobbyists devote more time to the party than movement organizations. If we do not attribute this configuration to the most likely cause, statistical chance, the following substantive interpretation may be plausible. The higher concentration of power in Ecolo involves some lobbyists in the core of the "old guard." Although they are highly committed to social movements, they spend relatively more time on national party affairs.

Overall, figure 7-1 reflects a relatively good fit between theory and data. In Agalev all relations are statistically significant. Given the preponderance of pragmatists and the small number of lobbyists and ideologues in Ecolo, statistically consistent and significant findings are unlikely. Multiple regressions employing national party activism, localism, and movementism as predictors of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists yield no fresh insights into the theoretically relevant patterns we have already analyzed. For Agalev all equations show statistically significant coefficients with the predicted sign. For Ecolo equations for ideologues and lobbyists are insignificant but with the correct sign. For Ecolo's lobbyists national party activism is a statistically significant predictor.

Preliminary Inferences about the Relationship between Participation and Power

In the introduction to this chapter we cautioned that participation and power in political parties are not identical. Nevertheless, if there is some affinity between the two concepts, what insights does our analysis of participation provide into Agalev's and Ecolo's power structures? The asymmetrical pattern of participation in both parties suggests an asymmetrical power structure. Ecology parties certainly do not realize the scope and the egalitarian distribution of participation they have sought in order to realize a democratic party organization. Comparing the two parties, patterns of participation indicate that Ecolo's power structure is more centralized. In contrast, Agalev is less dominated by a pragmatic "old guard." Its radical ideologues are closer to the centers of national decisionmaking and put greater emphasis on a democratic party organization than Ecolo's pragmatists.

Power and Party Organization

Although scholars have been fascinated by the problem of power and party democracy since the advent of political mass organization (cf. Ostrogorski 1902/1964; Michels 1911/1962; Weber 1920/1978), systematic empirical research and theory building have remained very limited. Studies of power relations in political parties have employed three different notions of power and empirical research strategies, such as decisional, reputational, and positional approaches.⁹ First, power defines an overt relationship in which one actor A communicates demands to another actor B that compel B to alter his preferred course of action or to tolerate those of A's, actions B would not have accepted in the absence of A's intervention. Power is identified by the outcomes of explicit *decisions*. A second, more subtle notion of power treats non-decisionmaking as an effect of power relations. An actor A may have the capacity to remove courses of action from B's set of feasible choices without engaging in an explicit controversy with B and without imposing A's preferences. A may exercise the power of public agenda setting and model the decision process so that certain choices will never be discussed. The power of A to shape agendas may simply derive from his *reputation* to be capable of opposing effectively a certain range of choices B might consider.¹⁰ In anticipation of A's intentions and capabilities B will not even try to bring up decision matters that A finds undesirable. A third notion of power is based on the *positions* and *resources* actors control in social institutions and does not directly refer to actors' subjective intentions and interests. A is more powerful than B, if A commands more resources and occupies a more favorable position in an institution that facilitates realizing his interests.

All three basic notions of power have advantages and limitations reviewed in a vast literature.¹¹ One of the particularly troublesome problems of power research is that the choice of a conception of power determines methods of empirical analysis. These methods, in turn, tend to bias the kind of power distribution one is likely to identify in a social institution. Decisional approaches that examine how actors get involved in politics and use knowledge, skills, and other capabilities to influence decisions, for example, rely on interviews with decisionmakers and tend to find a pluralist or strataarchal distribution of power.¹² Studies emphasizing the reputation of actors or the distribution of resources, in contrast, tend to identify oligarchical power structures. Similarly, the positional analysis of power resources and formal authority tends to support an elite view of power distribution. Given the interdependence between

concepts of power, methods of analysis, and research findings, it is always desirable to combine different approaches in the analysis of parties and examine whether they yield similar or different pictures of power in party organizations.

In our study of Agalev and Ecolo we have gathered information on positional and decisional power primarily through in-depth elite interviews with municipal councillors, party executives, and parliamentarians.¹³ Our survey among Agalev and Ecolo militants also provides information relevant to the decisional and positional approaches. As we have argued in the preceding section, our analysis of intraparty patterns of participation provides clues for the analysis of power structures because positional power usually translates into superior involvement in the decision process. Nevertheless, participation is not identical with decisional or positional power and says little about the power of agenda-building and nondecisionmaking. Our questionnaire therefore tapped the reputational dimension of power in order to examine nondecision modes of exercising power without participation.

Resources, Positional Power, and Decisionmaking

The positional power of party militants depends on the resources organizational roles confer on activists that enable them to gain access to information, to communicate political messages to audiences inside and outside the party and to exercise formal authority over decisions from which other activists are excluded. The positional structure and the decision process in Agalev and Ecolo incorporate elements of oligarchy but also important aspects of a stratarchal, pluralist distribution of power.

Party executives, members of parliament, and secretaries have a clear power advantage over all other activists. They have most access to information and communicate regularly with each other. Particularly those party officials who hold full-time paid political appointments, as do all Agalev and Ecolo members of parliament and some party executives and secretaries, are able to spend much time on political business and accumulate power resources. Party officials usually have also considerable influence on the agenda and procedure of decisionmaking in the parties, particularly in the preparation of conferences. Another power resource that is partially tied to positions is the access some members of parliament, party executives, or secretaries enjoy to the mass media. Media access multiplies a militant's influence on the party.

Compared to conventional parties, however, the resources vested in political office are limited. Party executives can serve only four years before they must leave office. Elected parliamentary office is factually restricted to two terms. Party secretaries are not elected by the rank and file but can be hired and fired at will by the party steering committees or executives. What may restrain the positional power of all peak offices most, ecology parties possess few means to communicate messages from the center to the periphery of the party organization or to control the policy of the regional and local party sections. As a matter of fact, these suborganizations enjoy a great deal of autonomy. This relationship is reflected in the limited funds and manpower the militants have granted to their party headquarters. In interviews party executives and members of parliament deplore their limited effectiveness in reaching out to the rank and file and pull the parties together in a more cohesive, solidary structure and consistent strategy. In this sense ecology parties tend to approximate the “stratarchal” model more than the centralist, elite governed “oligarchical” patterns that are typical of the other major Belgian parties.¹⁴

In several important respects Agalev’s positional power distribution differs from Ecolo’s. A first difference concerns the locus of power concentrations. In Agalev “strong” political personalities gravitate toward the parliamentary party group and the secretariat, while in Ecolo the party executive is the decisive political organ. Moreover, in Agalev the overall power distribution is more pluralist and less centralized than in Ecolo. Agalev has experienced fairly high turnover in its executive and its parliamentary party group. The party secretary, while influential in shaping political agendas, nevertheless has a very precarious legitimacy in the organization and must act cautiously because party militants are suspicious of his role in determining party policy.¹⁵ In contrast, in Ecolo a small group of party founders and activists who ran the party’s precursor organization or joined early on continue to dominate the party executive and face relatively few challenges from the rank and file. Ecolo’s party organization also tends to crystallize around a single regional center, the party headquarters at Namur, from which an overproportional share of the party leadership is recruited and two subcenters, Liege and Brussels. In Agalev the regional balance of party organization tends to be more pluralist, with at least Ghent, Antwerp, and Leuven acting as allies or counterweights to the party headquarters in Brussels.

The differences between Agalev and Ecolo are also confirmed by a study of *decisional involvement* and political conflict in both parties. We

will focus here on three comparable cases dealing with the parties' programs, leadership recruitment, and choice of strategy. First, Agalev and Ecolo held conferences on their socioeconomic programs in the spring of 1985. In both parties study commissions had been charged with preparing reports and a comprehensive list of conference resolutions to be discussed and decided on at the conferences. In Ecolo the conference attracted less than one hundred activists and was dominated by the party leadership, key figures of which were on the socioeconomic commission. In Agalev the commission was mostly composed of militants who did not belong to the party executive and had more freedom in drafting a program. Moreover, at the conference, after heated debates, some important proposals supported by the commission and by many militants in the leadership were overruled by the conference participants.

Second, in the spring of 1985 steering committees and party executives in Agalev and Ecolo discussed whether the national party should guide and review the nomination of parliamentary candidates at the regional level. In Ecolo a review of nomination procedures took place and actually led to the leadership's intervention in the Brussels party section, as well as in controversies about the nomination of candidates in other regions. In Agalev the steering committee and executive discussed the possibility of a review but eventually rejected it. Although it was clear that some national leaders were not entirely satisfied with regional nominations procedures and outcomes, local autonomy was preserved.

In a third case concerning party strategy, however, both parties evidence considerable central control. After the 1985 elections key figures in the Ecolo party executive initiated negotiations to support the Christian democratic and liberal parties in the Walloon regional parliament in certain policy areas. The steering committee and the rank and file had not authorized these initiatives and a vocal minority opposed them decidedly. Although a majority of the militants at a later conference endorsed the negotiations, rank-and-file militants still censored the leadership for not consulting a party conference in advance. In Agalev in the fall of 1984 the party steering committee had proposed to hold a conference on Belgium's defense policy and NATO membership. Yet after the socioeconomic party conference in May 1985, which led the bulk of Belgian newspapers to brand Agalev as a far left party, the steering committee and the executive quietly shelved plans for a conference on foreign policy. Since it was likely that a majority of rank-and-file members would call for Belgium's exit from NATO, an expectation confirmed by our survey (see table 4-2), media attention to Agalev's anti-NATO

position might have damaged the party's chances at the upcoming national elections.

Thus, decisional and positional analyses of power in Agalev and Ecolo tend to confirm that both parties have centers of decisionmaking and asymmetries of influence. Agalev, however, tends to centralize power to a lesser extent than Ecolo and resembles a "stratarchy," while Ecolo has made more strides toward an "oligarchical" organization. These findings converge with our study of patterns of participation in both parties, which also found a marked difference between the two parties. We will now explore whether a similar picture emerges when we turn to a reputational analysis of power.

Power and Reputation

Reputational studies of power are rare in the party literature because they pose sensitive questions parties often do not permit researchers to ask or militants are unwilling to answer.¹⁶ Our survey invited all militants to rate the relative power of major party organs above the level of local party sections on a five point scale (1 = very little power; 5 = very much power). At first sight these questions are similar to those we employed to construct our index of organizational discontent in chapter 3 (see table 3-1). Yet whereas that index is based on *evaluative* statements in which militants assess which party organs have too much or too little power, assessments of the party organs' factual power reputation are more geared to a *cognitive* dimension of beliefs. Later, we will examine the linkage between cognitive and evaluative dimensions in the assessment of party power in greater detail.

Table 7-9 presents the average power scores for each party organ in Agalev, Ecolo, and the entire data set, as well as correlations between party affiliation and power scores. Inspecting the overall scores first, militants perceive relatively small power differentials between most of the party organs, except regional assemblies. Most organs are rated as having "much" or "very much" power. Party executives rank highest, but they are closely followed by the parties' parliamentarians, conferences, steering committees, and secretariats. Since party conferences and steering committees involve the local party sections or their representatives directly, the militants see them as formidable "countervailing powers" to the leadership, composed of the party executives, the parliamentarians, and, at least in Agalev's case, the secretaries. In general, therefore, table 7-9 suggests a relatively "flat" distribution of power

Table 7-9 Average Influence Scores of Party Organs in Agalev and Ecolo (1.0 = lowest value; 5.0 = highest value)

	Agalev	Ecolo	Difference between Agalev and Ecolo (Pearson r's)	
1. National party executives	4.56	4.32	-.18**	(N = 212)
2. Members of parliament	4.39	3.89	-.29***	(N = 206)
3. Party conferences	4.32	3.98	-.19***	(N = 208)
4. Party steering committees	4.23	3.99	-.13*	(N = 213)
5. Party secretariats	4.31	3.59	-.36***	(N = 212)
6. Regional party assemblies	3.34	3.30	ns ^a	(N = 212)

(*) $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

^ans = not significant

which resembles more a stratarchy or even a democracy than an oligarchy.

In light of decisional and positional analyses, it is somewhat surprising how much power is attributed to party executives.¹⁷ At least in Agalev the party executive appears to be in a comparatively weak position. In contrast to the Agalev parliamentarians and to the secretaries party executives have usually less access to the mass media and serve in their offices without pay. Further, in-depth interviews with party executives routinely yield the impression that parliamentarians have more influence over party policy (Kitschelt 1989a: chap. 6). These discrepancies between findings based on decisional, positional, and reputational analyses are probably due to the party executives' greater visibility and proximity to rank-and-file members who try to exercise control over the party elite. In contrast to members of parliament and party secretaries party executives are directly elected by the rank and file, and they are held responsible for a working intraparty democracy. Therefore militants are highly sensitive to the political conduct of party executives and may use these party officials as targets for their anti-hierarchical resentments.¹⁸ In contrast, parliamentarians derive their legitimacy only indirectly from the party, but primarily from elections, and thus have a greater independence of political authority and legitimacy from the party rank and file.

The power reputation of political organs reported in table 7-9 displays

some interesting variations between Agalev and Ecolo. Agalev militants attribute *more power to all levels of party organization than Ecolo*. In part, this may indicate that Agalev militants experience a greater sense of political effectiveness and ability to influence political events, particularly through party conferences, and also believe in a greater political capacity of their representative agents (executives, parliamentarians, secretaries) than their colleagues in Ecolo, who are more disenchanted about the party's internal and external power capabilities. Power is not a simple zero-sum game between haves and have-nots but can be collectively maximized by an entire organization. It is likely that the higher mobilization of left-libertarian politics in Flanders enhances Agalev's sense of capabilities.

Agalev militants do not only attribute overall more power to their party organs but also smaller *power differentials* between "elite" and "mass" arenas of decisionmaking than Ecolo activists. This is particularly striking in a comparison of party executives, members of parliament, and party conferences. In Agalev the power reputation of parliamentarians and party conferences follows closely behind the national executives (power differentials compared to the executives are $-.17$ and $-.24$). In Ecolo, however, the gulf between party executives and parliamentarians ($-.43$) or party conferences ($-.34$) is much wider. The interparty difference is even greater when we compare the distance of the party secretariat from the party executives (Agalev: $-.25$; Ecolo: $-.73$). We interpret these configurations as yet another sign that power is more concentrated in Ecolo than in Agalev. In Ecolo a small group of influential figures around the party executives subordinates the secretariat and maintains its prerogative over the parliamentarians and the party conferences. In contrast, Agalev has developed a more pluralist field of countervailing powers in which executives, parliamentarians, party conferences, and secretaries hold their own and often vie for political control.¹⁹

The differences between Agalev and Ecolo, of course, can easily be related to the overall theoretical framework we have suggested in chapter 1. In areas where the left-libertarian cleavage is more mobilized in social movements and protest events, more ideologues and lobbyists get involved in ecology parties. The composition of political actors in parties, in turn, affects their internal structure and process. Where ideologues and lobbyists play a greater role in ecology parties, power structures are more diffuse, disjointed, and pluralist but also open up opportunities for charismatic authority. In spite of these differences between Agalev and Ecolo, however, we should emphasize that, over-

all, the stratification of power in both parties is fairly limited and probably not sufficiently articulated to qualify ecology parties as oligarchies.²⁰

Discrepancies between Decisional, Positional, and Reputational Analyses of Agalev and Ecolo Power Structures

In light of our decisional and positional analysis it is clear why Agalev militants put more emphasis on the power of parliamentarians and members of parliament than their Ecolo colleagues. Nevertheless, it remains a puzzle that Agalev militants also believe that their national executive is more powerful than Ecolo's, although our previous findings indicate the contrary. There are at least two alternative interpretations of this inconsistency. First, one of our research strategies simply yields incorrect results. Second, there are variables intervening between the actual power structure of party organs and the reputation they enjoy in the militants' eyes. These intervening variables may have to do with the militants' political ideology.

If the reputation of party organs is affected by the militants' ideologies, radical ideologues should attribute more power to the elite party organs than moderate pragmatists. In table 7-10 we have summed the power ratings for the three elite party organs (party executives, secretaries, members of parliament) and related them to our subgroups of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists. Indeed, the relationship between subgroup affiliation and power evaluation is rather striking, although it barely fails to reach statistical significance because of the large number of missing cases. As in previous analyses, the missing cases are revealing by themselves: it is primarily pragmatists who refuse to rate the power of party organs. Because pragmatists tend to be satisfied with party democracy, they perceive our survey question on the power reputation of party organs as a potential threat to the party's democratic legitimacy and therefore ignore these items.

A simple bivariate correlation between intraparty ideological tendencies and perceptions of power relations, however, is insufficient to support our argument. The causality can run both ways: militants may perceive the power of party organs based on their ideological preconception, but these preconceptions could also be the result of the parties' actual power structure. Following this second interpretation, table 7-10 does not rule out that Agalev militants are more likely to become ideologues precisely because power is more centralized in the party than

Table 7-10 Orientation of Party Activists and the Power Reputation of the Party Elite Organs (Agalev and Ecolo Militants Combined) (in percentages)

	Power reputation of party executives, secretaries, and members of parliament, combined index				
	Very high (Index 14–15)	High (Index 11–13)	Moderate (Index 3–10)	No response to the power index	
Pragmatists	27	15	3	55	<i>N</i> = 99
Lobbyists	34	32	2	32	<i>N</i> = 56
Ideologues	64	13	3	21	<i>N</i> = 39
All three groups	37	20	3	41	<i>N</i> = 194
Cramer's V: .317					
Chi ² : <i>p</i> = .13					

in Ecolo. Whereas the first interpretation assumes that cognitive views of the party organs' power reputations are distorted by normative frames, the second interpretation claims the reverse.

In order to test this second proposition, we have regressed the (cognitive) assessment of a party organ's power reputation on two variables, affiliation of a militant with Agalev or Ecolo and his or her normative assessment whether a party organ has too much or too little power (reported in table 3-1). These equations allow us to dissociate personal ideology from cognitive perceptions of the party organs' power at least partially. If the normative evaluation of an individual party organ, rather than membership in Agalev or Ecolo, is responsible for the assessment of the party organ's actual power, we conclude that cognitive judgments are distorted by normative frames. If party membership, however, is a powerful predictor of cognitions, we infer that militants report real differences between Agalev's and Ecolo's power structure that have nothing to do with ideology.

In table 7-11 we have tested the power reputation of the five major organs of decisionmaking in Agalev and Ecolo following this logic. These tests provide mixed evidence for our alternative hypotheses. Among organs of rank-and-file participation differential assessments of the steering committees' power appear to be based entirely on ideology

Table 7-11 The Power Reputation of Party Organs: Are They Influenced by the Militants' Personal Political Orientations or the Actual Structure of the Parties?

A. Organs of rank and file influence					
	Power reputation of steering committees			Power reputation of national conferences	
	B	Beta		B	Beta
Evaluation of steering committee power	+.34	+.32***	Evaluation of conference power	+.30	+.25**
Agalev party member	+.18	+.07	Agalev party member	+.28	+.15*
Adjusted R ²	.10*** (N = 184)			.07** (N = 196)	
B. Organs of party elite influence					
	Power reputation of party secretaries			Power reputation of members of parliament	
	B	Beta		B	Beta
Evaluation of party secretaries' power	+.45	+.40***	Evaluation of the parliamentarians' power	+.24	+.20**
Agalev party member	+.51	+.26***	Agalev party member	+.45	+.26***
Adjusted R ²	.26*** (N = 176)			.10*** (N = 178)	
	Power reputation of party executives				
	B	Beta			
Evaluation of the executives' power	+.12	+.14*			
Agalev party member	+.22	+.13(*)			
Adjusted R ²	.03* (N = 183)				

(*) $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

not party membership. Yet the power reputation of party conferences depends both on ideology and party membership. This confirms our decisional analysis that Agalev conferences have more independent influence on party policy than Ecolo conferences.

To be consistent with our findings in the positional, decisional, and reputational analysis of party organs expressing elite influence (section B of table 7-11), the regressions should show that Agalev membership increases the militants' ratings of the power of party secretaries and members of parliament. The regressions show that this is indeed the case, although considerable variance in the assessment of power reputations is also explained by ideological frames. Finally, we expect that variances in the party executive's power should be mostly explained in terms of ideology. Moreover, Agalev membership should actually depress the perceived power of the executive because we argued earlier that Ecolo's executive is actually more powerful than Agalev's. Our regression has very little explanatory power and provides no clear confirmation or refutation of our main hypothesis. Ideology does matter, but the weak impact of party membership on power assessments leads us to conclude that Agalev's executive is indeed more powerful than Ecolo's, a result clearly inconsistent with our previous arguments. Adding more variables measuring ideology (such as adherence to party subgroups, strategic views, or policy position) to the regression gradually whittles away the independent effect of party affiliation but does not reduce it to zero or reverse the sign, as we would have welcomed.

We must keep in mind, however, that our inability to derive a statistical result that is consistent with previous findings may be due to conceptual slippage and the choice of empirical methodology. Moreover, due to the lower mobilization of left-libertarian protest in Wallonia, all Ecolo activists may express a more deferential view of political authority than their Agalev colleagues. As a consequence, Ecolo's rating of the party executive's power would be depressed for ideological reasons, but we could not detect it in our statistical analysis of intra- and interparty differences.

In light of these limitations to separate cognitive and normative cues shaping the militants' perception of Agalev's and Ecolo's power structures, we should be quite satisfied with our findings, even though we cannot eliminate all inconsistencies. The decisional and the positional analysis, and to some extent also the reputational study, still give us reason to believe that Agalev tends to be the more pluralist and open party, with more power vested in the organs of grass-roots participation. Nevertheless, Agalev has also a distinct tendency to centralize power

around a few outstanding individuals located in the parliamentary party and the secretariat. Maybe the very openness and fluidity of Agalev's organizational structures enables charismatic individuals to accumulate more power.²¹ Ecolo, in contrast, vests relatively more power in the party executive, an organ with a greater potential for the bureaucratic exertion of political power.

Oligarchy as an Interpretative Framework

In contrast to the natural sciences, social theories are not exclusively the creation of scholars, but are generated, understood, interpreted, and acted upon by the subjects of analysis themselves, the human beings located in a given set of institutions, problems, and historical circumstances. Hence, theoretical propositions often emerge from the actors' self-interpretation of social practices. Michels's theory of oligarchy in voluntary associations is a good example of this process. Robert Michels's involvement in Italian and French revolutionary syndicalism was an important influence on his later formulation of the "iron law of oligarchy" (Beetham 1977). Michels's theory has always remained both a scholarly artifact of theoretical reflection and an empirical investigation, as well as a practical interpretation of social reality by party activists. In this respect ecology parties are no exception. It is interesting, therefore, to understand how Agalev and Ecolo activists interpret the relevance of Michels's theory for their own efforts to build a democratic party organization and assess the opportunities and limitations of democracy in modern parties.

In exploring this topic one problem comes to mind at once. In his celebrated but controversial work on the rise of oligarchy in modern mass parties, Michels (1911/1962) provides at least three different, yet interconnected theories about the nature and the origins of oligarchy. These theories may be mutually supportive and consistent, but they may also compete with each other. We must therefore identify the various dimensions and propositions of Michels's theory before we can explore the relevance that ecology party militants ascribe to it.²²

Michels's work contains a weak and a strong conception of oligarchy. The "weak" notion is directed against the claim of classical participatory visions of democracy that all citizens can become engaged in collective decisionmaking. Similar to Mosca's and Pareto's elite theories, Michels emphasizes the advantages of small groups in controlling social institutions. Going beyond elite theory, however, he also develops a second, "strong" notion of oligarchy, according to which elites and

masses inevitably have conflicting interests. Since elites command the superior resources and organizing capacities, they will prevail over the masses. Applied to parties, Michels believes that leaders are always oriented toward a conservative status quo position because they derive material and status rewards from the existing political system, whereas rank-and-file activists may call for more radical change.

Michels traces the origins of weak and strong oligarchy back to at least three causal chains. The first explanation is particularly useful for our understanding of “weak” oligarchy. Beyond a certain size, defined by the number of participants and the complexity of tasks in an organization, all social institutions develop hierarchies for purely “technical” imperatives of efficiency. In modern political science language we can flesh out Michels’s argument in the following way: in competitive democracies parties are purposive associations whose objectives (attaining votes and offices, policymaking) must be reached with a limited amount of resources (time, money, activists). Hence, they must economize on costly transactions inside the organization in order to devote a maximum of resources to the external competitive struggle. Hierarchies happen to be more resource-conserving than participatory democracy. Borrowing from the institutional economics of organization, one may label this first explanation of oligarchy a *theory of transaction costs* (e.g., Williamson 1975).

For Michels the theory of transaction costs is only the first step of his analysis. In the second part of his book Michels goes on to examine the party militants’ psychological drives and dispositions. Building on popular late nineteenth-century mass psychology, he couches his key proposition into the terms of a *theory of membership lethargy*. Rank-and-file members of voluntary associations usually do not possess the intellectual and emotional capabilities and the resources (time, information) to participate in the workings of complex organizations. Therefore, complex tasks are delegated to professionals who have the resources and devotion to the party to carry them out. Moreover, Michels believes the masses have an emotional longing to identify with charismatic politicians who have dedicated their lives to the party and who master techniques to enhance the legitimacy of leadership roles through demagoguery, emotionally charged appeals, and collective rituals.

Michels, however, treats the imperatives of transaction costs and membership as preliminary stages of his enterprise which prove only the necessity of a “weak” form of oligarchy in political associations. But Michels wishes to show that weak oligarchy inevitably gives rise to strong oligarchy. Because complex political associations are built on

hierarchy, functional differentiation, and a stratification of goals and motivations, party leaders necessarily develop different interests than the rank and file. To show this, Michels develops a third component of his overall argument we label a *theory of elite control*. The leaders' self-interest can be explained in psychological terms, together with a theory of social mobility. Political leaders, particularly in organizations that challenge the status quo, come from positions of social marginality and look back on their political career as a process of upward social mobility which has eventually placed them in pivotal political positions that enjoy high social esteem and supply strong selective incentives (income, publicity, reverence, etc.). Leaders, therefore, will do everything to maintain their position. Defense of their prerogatives is most easily accomplished by defending the status quo and, if unavoidable, by supporting only incremental change that maximizes the probability they will remain in office.

In other words an oligarchical leadership engages in a transformation of parties that borders on a *conspiracy* against the rank and file. Indeed, much of the leftist and syndicalist critique of socialist parties thrives on the theme that leaders conspire to subvert the true revolutionary intentions of the working class.²³ In a similar vein organizational radicals in ecology parties usually suspect that party leaders strive for self-aggrandizement and suffocate the autonomous political expression of the rank and file. Moderates, in contrast, may be less willing to support a "strong" theory of oligarchy and elite control but explain the vertical distribution and concentration of decisionmaking in terms of a "technocratic" theory of transaction costs. Those who emphasize membership lethargy may fall somewhere between the extremes of a technocratic and a conspiratorial view of party power.

In our survey Ecolo and Agalev activists were asked to evaluate six propositions why grass-roots democracy may be difficult to realize within ecology parties. Each of Michels' three theoretical hypotheses was operationalized by one pair of propositions. Table 7-12 summarizes the militants' responses, with the six items rank ordered according to the importance militants attribute to each as an impediment to party democracy.

It is clear that most respondents do see the relevance of at least some of Michels's arguments for the democratic practice of their own parties. Yet the militants broadly support only the most modest and weakest of Michels's notions of oligarchy, the theory of transaction costs. In fact, support monotonically declines from statements expressing the "weak" concept of oligarchy to those reflecting a "strong" syndicalist view of

Table 7-12 Impediments to Democracy in Ecology Parties (in percentages)

Statements with which militants	Agree ^a	Partially agree	Disagree ^a
Theory of transaction cost			
1. Decisions must often be made too rapidly to consult members (<i>N</i> = 245)	57	20	23
2. There is not enough personnel, time, and means of communication to contact members (<i>N</i> = 242)	57	19	24
Theory of membership lethargy			
3. Grass-roots members have little interest in political problems at the national level (<i>N</i> = 241)	40	25	36
4. The local members do not know enough about complicated national problems (<i>N</i> = 242)	33	26	41
Theory of elite control			
5. People at the top make too little effort to include the members (<i>N</i> = 238)	34	24	43
6. The leadership does not want to risk its ideas (<i>N</i> = 229)	27	25	48

^aCategories collapse two values in the original questionnaire.

the causes and consequences of power centralization in ecology parties. Thus, a majority of militants does not believe that constraints of democracy originate in the evil desires of elites.

The militants' rejection of conspiracy theories of elite control is more sharply highlighted in their responses to a second set of questions where militants were asked to rank order the three most important impediments to democracy among the six statements we presented in table 7-12. Thus respondents were forced to make choices between different theories of oligarchy. The most important item among the six alternatives received three points, the second was given two points, and the third one point. In table 7-13 we have summed the rankings for each set of two items that relate to one of the three theories of oligarchy. The theory of transaction cost is clearly most widely supported by both Agalev and Ecolo mili-

Table 7-13 Summed Rank Orderings of Impediments to Democracy According to Agalev and Ecolo Militants (in percentages)

	Transaction costs		Membership lethargy		Elite control	
	Agalev	Ecolo	Agalev	Ecolo	Agalev	Ecolo
Least important (0–1)	21.6	20.8	50.8	31.2	58.8	87.0
Medium important (2–3)	43.1	46.8	38.6	46.8	31.3	9.1
Most important (4–5)	35.4	32.5	10.6	21.1	10.9	3.9
Average value	2.85	2.90	1.68	2.36	1.33	0.53
Pearson r's	(ns)		.21**		–.26***	
N	130	77	132	77	131	77

p ≤ .01 *p ≤ .001

tants. Even those activists who may be discontented with the existing distribution of power often realize that their demands for more democracy cannot be easily translated into political practice. In other words, while the index of democratic discontent measures a purely *normative* perspective on democracy, assessments of oligarchy theory are tempered by *cognitive* elements, although we will see in a moment that these assessments are also influenced by strong evaluative components.

Table 7-13 reveals considerably different levels of support for the theories of membership lethargy and elite control among Agalev and Ecolo activists. The former put significantly greater emphasis on the theory of elite control, the most “radical” of Michels’s three explanations of oligarchy. In contrast, the latter believe that membership lethargy is the more important impediment to democracy. On the one hand, the parties’ diverging evaluations of Michels’s theories may follow from their actual organizational experience. As we have argued above, the scope of participation in Agalev is wider than in Ecolo. Hence membership lethargy is seen as a less important obstacle to democracy. On the other hand, however, it is a puzzle why Agalev militants are more likely to blame a lack of intraparty democracy on “strong” oligarchy, or a failure of the party leaders to respond to rank-and-file demands, while we have argued earlier that Agalev is the more pluralist party. Our hypothesis is that this discrepancy is due to the Agalev activists’ greater democratic radicalism, rendering them more likely to blame constraints of democracy on elite control.

We can test this proposition in the same way in which we distinguished between normative and cognitive components of influence on the militants' assessments of actual power distributions inside the parties. Figure 7-2 demonstrates that in both parties ideologues are more likely to support theories of elite control and less likely to endorse theories of membership lethargy than lobbyists and pragmatists.²⁴ Regression equations analogous to those presented in table 7-11 reveal that the assessment of elite control theory is primarily due to ideology, not due to true differences between the parties. Once we hold constant for the type of activist, strategic radicalism, and protest involvement, independent differences between Ecolo and Agalev in the evaluation of elite control are sharply reduced.²⁵

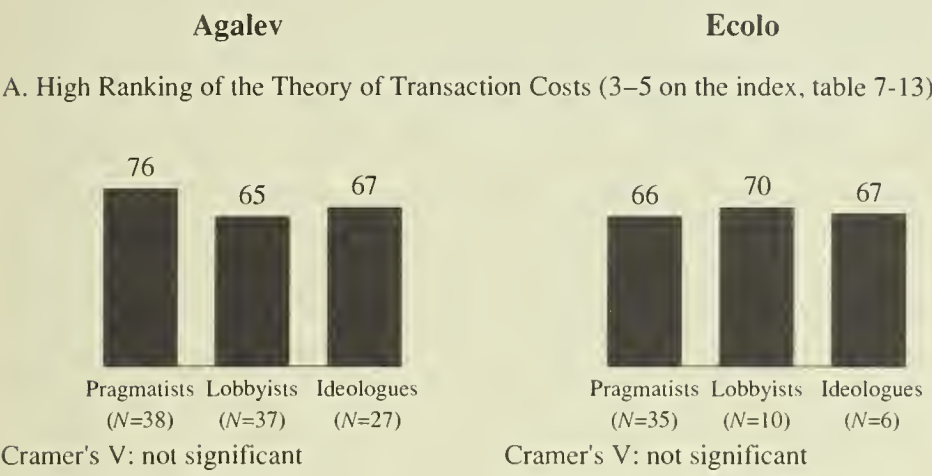
The evidence is different when we examine the normative and cognitive roots of assessing membership lethargy. In multiple regression party affiliation continues to account for almost half of the explained variance, even once we control for political ideologies.²⁶ Thus, Agalev's and Ecolo's divergent assessments of membership lethargy are probably due to true differences in the parties' experience. This conclusion is consistent with our analysis of participation earlier in this chapter. Membership lethargy is indeed a less serious problem in Agalev than in Ecolo.

Conclusion

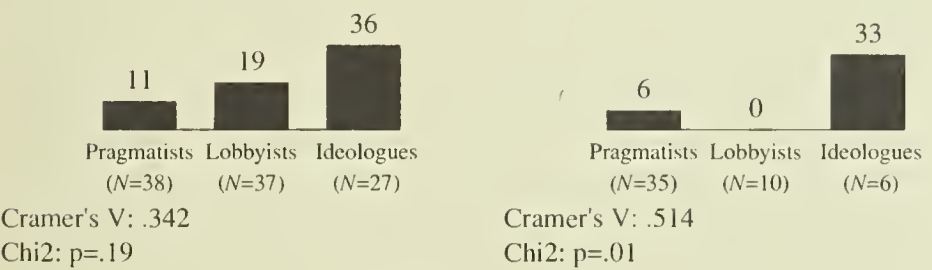
While studies of power relations in political parties are usually few and far between, in this chapter we have employed no less than five different approaches to interpret the power structures of the Belgian ecology parties Agalev and Ecolo. First, we have analyzed patterns of participation in both parties. These patterns are related to, though not identical with, positional and decisional dimensions of power. Next, we explored the positional distribution of power (resources) and the decisional authority of the party leadership. Then we turned to the power reputation of different party organs. In spite of the multiple methods and analytic concepts of power we have employed, each time a broadly similar picture emerged. This is particularly notable given that power studies have been found to suffer from a strong interdependence between concepts, methods, and findings.

Although ecology parties evidence a considerable stratification of internal political power, they cannot be described as oligarchies in Michels's strong sense. Moreover, they often resemble loosely coupled institutions with multiple countervailing power centers rather than tightly organized, centralist bureaucratic hierarchies. Political parties, in gen-

Figure 7-2 The Political Orientations of Ecology Party Activists and the Ranking of Impediments to Intraparty Democracy (in percentages)



B. High Ranking of the Theory of Elite Control (3–5 on the index, table 7-13)



C. High Ranking of the Theory of Membership Lethargy (3–5 on the index, talbe 7-13)



eral, do not approximate Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy, even if they concentrate political authority in a small elite. In ecology parties the activists' left-libertarian ideology constitutes an additional source of resistance against the formation of immutable oligarchies which is likely to restrain adoption of a hierarchical mass party model, even as ecology parties age and routinize their internal operation.

In Agalev the relatively pluralist, strataarchal pattern is more pronounced than in Ecolo which generally approximates the oligarchical model of party organization more closely. We have interpreted this difference as yet another piece of evidence supporting our argument that contextual factors, such as the mobilization of left-libertarian movements in a party's environment, influence a party's internal structure and process. The selective recruitment of activists with different ideological orientations as well as political socialization through strategic debates translate contextual forces into internal party politics.

In an environment of high cleavage mobilization parties have more ideologues and lobbyists among their militants. The parties' internal composition shapes their organizational process. For Agalev and Ecolo the consequences of differential recruitment and intraparty debates surface in the patterns of political participation and control, yet also the activists' self-reflection on their practices. As we have seen, practices and interpretations may give rise to an interesting discrepancy. Because Agalev includes more ideologues, its party organization tends to be more pluralist and strataarchal than Ecolo's. Yet the very same radicals that democratize intraparty politics are also more inclined to interpret the power structure of their own party as an unresponsive oligarchy governed by small elites. Hence Agalev militants attribute more power to the party leadership and more often endorse elite control theories as accurate description of intraparty impediments to democracy than would be warranted based on the party's actual patterns of participation and decisionmaking. Thus the activists' own ideological coding of social reality, rather than observable practices of political interaction, explain much of why Agalev militants tend to see their party as more oligarchical than Ecolo militants.

Our investigation can serve as a warning against simplistic analyses of organizational power structures in parties or interest groups. It is crucial to distinguish the researchers' coding of social reality, or what we may call the "observed" practices of activists, and the activists' coding of reality, or the "subjective" interpretations of political practices. If both codings diverge, little is accomplished by insisting on the truth or falsehood of one or the other of the alternative perspectives. All too

often discrepancies between interpretations of social reality are not due to research accidents yielding incorrect data or to errors and lies on the part of the social actors, but exhibit an internal social logic that can be made intelligible if we appreciate the multifaceted nature of social reality. Then the objective of political analysis is to show how the actors' and the researchers' views of reality are systematically interrelated and can be combined in a consistent and more encompassing interpretation.

8 Pathways to Political Leadership

Since Agalev and Ecolo militants admit that high transaction costs of political communication and widespread lethargy among the rank and file are impediments to a fully participatory party democracy, they do not deny that even parties which attempt to expand opportunities for democratic decisionmaking require formal leadership. Roughly 50 percent of all respondents agree that publicly known party leaders are useful, whereas only about one quarter find them damaging to ecology parties. Moreover, 54 percent of the militants reject the statement that everybody is competent for political office, while only 24 percent agree with it.

Thus, party militants realize that some hierarchical division of labor, within certain limitations, may be beneficial for the political pursuit of more democracy and ecological protection in contemporary society.

Although ecology parties offer more chances for rank-and-file involvement than other Belgian parties, they must introduce some functional differentiation and vertical concertation. Intraparty democracy can be preserved as long as the party leadership can be made responsive to rank-and-file demands. The extent to which Agalev and Ecolo leaders represent the grass-roots membership can be examined by comparing the political experiences and ideas of leaders and followers. In a representative democratic party the attributes of party leaders closely match those of the followers. In statistical terms none of the behavioral and ideological characteristics we have examined in previous chapters should be significantly associated with formal leadership positions. Parties may also still qualify as democratic if they meet a somewhat less exacting criterion. The party leadership may not represent all ideological positions but acts on the rank-and-file majority opinion and provides a set of institutional safeguards that enable minorities to compete for office and eventually become a majority.¹ This type of democratic majority rule inside political parties, however, is constrained by a unique feature that sets voluntary political associations apart from democracy in the nation state. Disgruntled members of a voluntary organization often find exiting is easy, whereas emigration from one's home country is not. Since dissatisfied minorities may set up new independent organizations, the leadership of parties or interest groups must take great care to represent all political tendencies in executive positions and not to stray too far from a broad consensus among the bulk of their membership if they wish to minimize the risk of splits and factionalism.

In this chapter we will compare the background, involvement, and ideological outlooks of party leaders and rank and file in Agalev and Ecolo while keeping in mind the problem of democratic representativeness. Three different types of party leaders may be distinguished. First, there are the party executives. Although militants consider party executives the most powerful players (cf. table 7-9), their limited control of resources (little access to the mass media, no salary, no right to speak or vote in parliament) suggests that they are less important than the parties' parliamentarians, the second group of party leaders. This rank order is indirectly proven by the militants' eagerness to run for parliamentary seats but not for party office: the supply of candidates for elected office always exceeds the number of promising nominations by far, whereas supply barely equals demand for positions on Agalev's or Ecolo's party executive.

Since the number of actual parliamentarians in Agalev and Ecolo has been too small for systematic statistical analysis, we have operational-

ized this second leadership group as all those electoral candidates in the 1985 national elections who reckoned they had a realistic chance to be elected to parliament. Due to the rules of the Belgian electoral system, a considerable proportion of Agalev and Ecolo members ends up on the parties' electoral lists, but a much smaller proportion of the nominees, usually those who head the parties' list in their electoral constituency, has any chance of winning. Also within the parties only those positions heading the electoral list and promising a chance to win a legislative mandate were contested by competing candidates. Even among the candidates who succeeded in winning the nomination in 1985, however, very few ended up with a parliamentary seat.²

The third group of party leaders are those local activists who hold municipal elected office. They are probably less important than parliamentary candidates and party executives. Municipal councillors operate in a relatively depoliticized environment with highly constrained political agendas, given the fairly centralized Belgian political regime with little municipal autonomy. Like party executives, local elected officers serve in honorary positions and are not freed from employment outside politics.³

Table 8-1 shows the proportion of Agalev and Ecolo militants who have held one or more of the three leadership positions. In this chapter we will try to determine how ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists are represented in the party leadership. Do intraparty groups vary in their chances to win leadership offices and, if yes, why? Is it true that party leaders tend to be more "moderate" than rank-and-file activists, a proposition with a long history of supporters (May 1973)?

The Theory and Practice of Leadership Recruitment in Political Parties

The literature on leadership recruitment in parties has always been voluminous (cf. Czudnowski 1975). Four research traditions can be distinguished. First, a sociological approach has examined the social class background of party leaders, activists, and voters. Up to the 1960s the social background of party leaders reflected to some extent that of their electoral core constituencies.⁴ Over the past thirty years the educational revolution and the greater political professionalism in most continental European mass parties have led to a convergence of the leaders' social background, regardless of party ideology and constituency. In general, leaders tend to be more affluent, educated, white, and male than the parties' electorate.⁵

Table 8-1 Party Leaders in Agalev and Ecolo (in percentages)

	Agalev ^a	Ecolo ^a	All ^a
Past and present members of the party executive	27 (43) ^b	29 (27)	27 (70)
Elected representatives (municipal councillors)	19 (31)	27 (25)	22 (56)
Candidates for the 1985 parliamentary elections on 'electable' list positions (candidates 1985)	20 (33)	30 (28)	24 (61)

^aPercentage figures indicate the proportion of all Agalev ($N = 162$) or all Ecolo ($N = 94$) activists who hold one of these offices.

^bNumber of cases in parentheses.

Agalev's and Ecolo's grass-roots militants are already characterized by some of those socioeconomic attributes that distinguish party leaders from rank-and-file members in other parties, such as higher levels of education. For this reason we expect few discrepancies between ecology party leaders and followers. A different issue, however, is the underrepresentation of women in traditional politics. As we have seen in chapter 5, one quarter of all Agalev and Ecolo militants are female. Given that Agalev and Ecolo appeal to feminist issues and attract a considerable share of female militants, it is interesting to explore whether women's chances to rise to leadership positions are better here than in traditional parties.⁶

A second strand of research has focused on the organizational decision points in the recruitment of party leaders.⁷ The degree of (de)centralization and participation in the choice of party leaders and parliamentary representatives has been found to vary depending on the parties' ideologies and the constitutional systems in which they operate. In Italy, for example, parties of the right tend to be more decentralized than parties of the left and leave more freedom to choose parliamentary candidates to the local level. Yet in Belgium the nomination process for members of parliament in all conventional parties has become increasingly centralized in the hands of the party elites to assure that electoral candidates include an occupational, linguistic, regional, and ideological balance of candidates representative of the parties' electoral constituencies (Obler 1974; Cculeers 1977).

Depending on a party's recruitment practices, politicians with different strengths will be nominated for electoral office. Where the process

is relatively decentralized, local roots may be most important for a successful parliamentary career. Where it is centralized, militants with national visibility inside their party have greater chances to be nominated in local constituencies. In Agalev and Ecolo party statutes stipulate that nominations for parliamentary elections are made by the regional party assemblies. Therefore, successful candidates are likely to have local roots. Only the party executives who are chosen at the parties' national conferences should stand out by their concern for national party affairs.

For our analysis of intraparty group influence over elite selection, a third and a fourth approach to leadership recruitment are especially instructive. They focus on the incentives, the functional requirements, and the structural opportunities for holding political office. We will discuss these approaches jointly in order to combine and modify their key propositions. Michels's (1911/1962) and Luxemburg's (1971) classical contributions to the sociology of political parties suggest that rank-and-file party activists are more radical than party leaders. The status, income, and power associated with office are incentives that induce leaders to do everything to preserve their positions and privileges. According to classical party theory, this usually implies a moderation of the leaders' political stances, at least in competitive party systems.

Today, the leader/follower dichotomy is still the premise of some theories of party behavior (cf. Wellhofer and Hennessey 1974; Robertson 1976; Tsebelis 1985) but must be modified in light of the empirical evidence. "Activists" are not a uniform mass but are vertically and horizontally stratified into a variety of groups.⁸ Ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists can be found at all levels of the party organization. Moreover, the relative strength of these groups varies across parties and depends on external opportunity structures, such as the mobilization of social cleavages and public opinion. Thus, we found many more ideologues in Agalev than in Ecolo, a difference following from the greater mobilization of the left-libertarian cleavage in Flanders. Over time a party's group composition depends on its strategic performance, changing political institutions, and shifts in voter preferences.⁹ All this leads us to conclude that there is no rigid dichotomy between leaders and followers in political parties.

Turning to the vertical stratification of political views in Agalev and Ecolo, the dichotomy of leaders and followers is too simplistic to capture the parties' true dynamics. Traditionally, political scientists have postulated a curvilinear disparity between one group consisting of mod-

erate, uninvolved voters and party leaders at the bottom and the top of party politics and another formed by a radical middle mass of party activists (cf. McKenzie 1955; May 1973; Kavanagh 1985). This image must be replaced by more subtle distinctions which are based on the occurrence of curvilinearity within parties themselves.¹⁰ A number of studies found that higher-ranking party officials tend to be more radical than localists, yet elected party leaders return to a more moderate position.¹¹ As we have argued in chapter 1, local party activists have different incentives and visions to get politically involved than activists who are interested in national politics. The same mechanisms that May (1973: 144–51) holds responsible for the discrepancy between voters and party leaders, on the one hand, and rank-and-file party activists, on the other, are at work inside political parties: (1) Middle-level activists who focus on national party affairs, but do not hold office, are more ideologically motivated and respond more to purposive incentives than local activists or the party leadership. (2) Unlike party leaders, middle-level activists are closely surveilled neither by local party activists nor by voters and hence are able to express unrepresentative positions. Finally, (3) party leaders, especially those with electoral mandates, are socialized into institutions of parliamentary representation and bargaining that orient them more toward strategic moderation than does the intraparty socialization experienced by the parties' middle-level activists.

Even with these qualifications, however, the law of curvilinear disparity may have limited power to explain the distribution of political opinions in parties. In addition to internal conditions, external opportunity structures influence the relationship between local party activists, middle-level militants, and party leaders. In addition to the social mobilization of a party's core supporters, its electoral competitiveness may influence the prominence of radicals or moderates (cf. Seligman 1961; Robertson 1976: 144–73). Where elections in a two-party system promise to be close or where, in multiparty systems, parties believe that winning additional votes will significantly affect their chances to determine government formation and public policy, parties are likely to field moderate candidates who can win voters wavering between competing party camps.¹² Under these circumstances an opinion gap between leaders and middle-level activists is more likely than where the competitiveness of a party is deemed to be low.

We are now ready to specify propositions about the relationship between ideology and office holding in Agalev and Ecolo. First, ideo-

logues, lobbyists, and pragmatists have different motivations and incentives to seek political offices. Local elected office will attract pragmatists who tend to be the stalwarts of their local party sections, are interested in incremental social improvements, and often “sacrifice” themselves to run for the less popular and less influential municipal tasks. Lobbyists also may have a certain interest in local office, while ideologues definitely do not. Instead, national executive party office will be most attractive for middle-level radicals because it allows them to deal with national party policy and strategy. If ideologues are unrepresentative of the rank and file, they have a greater chance to be elected to the party executive than to parliament. Since party executives have little access to the mass media and little control over the local party organizations, moderate localists will pay less attention to elections for the party executive than to the nomination of electoral candidates. Because executive offices often escape intense surveillance, militants who are unrepresentative of the rank and file still have a chance to be elected.

In contrast to municipal elected office and national party executives, pragmatists, lobbyists, and ideologues feel equally attracted by national parliamentary mandates because these offices provide the overall greatest potential political influence and ability to communicate political messages to broad audiences. If Agalev and Ecolo indeed implement a democratic, decentralized selection process, candidates for electoral office should reflect the ideological composition of each party quite accurately.

The linkage between political office and ideological conviction is modified by the extent to which the left-libertarian cleavage is mobilized in a party’s environment and by the relative strength of intragroups. In Wallonia, where left-libertarian social conflicts are comparatively subdued and Ecolo is dominated by pragmatists, we expect few discrepancies between the rank and file and party leaders, regardless of the political office at issue. If anything, leaders are more moderate than the average party member because the small minority of radicals can be excluded from holding important offices. In Agalev, however, higher left-libertarian mobilization and a greater pluralization of ideological currents increases the chance that discrepancies between officeholders and rank-and-file militants occur. Municipal office may predominantly go to locally oriented pragmatists, whereas ideologues may be over-represented among party executives. In nominations for parliamentary mandates, however, all tendencies will vie for nominations and end up with roughly equal representation.

Sociological Determinants of Party Elites

As Agalev's and Ecolo's sociological homogeneity leads us to expect, there are few systematic relations between the militants' social resource endowment and their ability to gain office. Age plays no role for the recruitment of municipal councillors or party executives, but older people have slightly better chances to become candidates for parliament (Agalev: $\tau\text{-}b = +.17$, $p \leq .05$, $N = 161$; Ecolo: $\tau\text{-}b = +.12$, not significant, $N = 93$). This, however, may be an artifact of the constitutional provision that candidates for the Upper House of the Belgian parliament, the Senate, must be at least forty years old.

Higher levels of education slightly improve chances to become a member of the parties' executives (Agalev: $\tau\text{-}b = +.20$, $p \leq .01$, $N = 161$; Ecolo: $\tau\text{-}b = +.14$, not significant, $N = 91$), but equivalent patterns do not appear with respect to municipal office and parliamentary candidacy. Since age and education make little difference in the choice of party leaders, it is not surprising that income does not either. Only Agalev municipal councillors have somewhat higher incomes than the rank and file ($\tau\text{-}b = +.20$, $p \leq .01$, $N = 160$).

Agalev and Ecolo women have about the same chances as men to become municipal councillors or parliamentary candidates on a promising list place. Thus, about one quarter of these positions are held by women. Whereas other left-libertarian parties, such as the West German Greens, have introduced formal parity regulations to assure the equal representation of women, most Belgian party activists, including women, reject gender as an ascriptive criterion for leadership recruitment and hesitate to endorse parity principles (cf. Kitschelt 1989a: chap. 7). In party executive office women are still disadvantaged compared to their male colleagues in both parties (Agalev: $\tau\text{-}b = -.15$, $p \leq .05$, $N = 162$; Ecolo: $\tau\text{-}b = -.14$, $p = .18$, $N = 94$). This result is due to at least two reasons. First, women still tend to be more reluctant about running for a political office than male Agalev and Ecolo activists. Second, if they run for office, they prefer to compete for the more prestigious electoral mandates. At the same time, male activists encourage women to run primarily as parliamentary nominees for electoral reasons. In the eyes of voters and the media female candidates help to establish Agalev's and Ecolo's claim to represent feminist policy issues more than the conventional Belgian parties.

One fairly clear-cut socioeconomic pattern of variation between officeholders and rank-and-file militants, as well as among holders of

different offices, emerges when we examine the occupational background of party activists (table 8-2). Being employed in social services or in business and administrative services does not significantly affect the militants' chances to get onto Agalev's or Ecolo's party executives. Yet having a professional background in these areas significantly improves chances to be nominated or elected to public office. Seventy-three percent of municipal councillors work in these professions, but only 50 percent of the militants without mandates. Among 1985 parliamentary candidates on "electable" list places the discrepancy is 64 to 52 percent. Conversely, activists who work in industry or agriculture, as well as activists outside the labor market, have lower chances to attain elected office. Thus, it again is a core group in the service professions that has the greatest chance to run for political office. Moreover, as in conventional parties, managerial employment or liberal professions improve the prospects to rise into the party leadership. In other words, Agalev and Ecolo have a tendency to nominate those militants for electoral office who have the greatest "cultural capital" and command the highest occupational prestige.

Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that the socioeconomic discrepancies between party leaders, militants, and voters in ecology parties remain modest. Ecology parties have a more homogeneous following than conventional mass parties. As a consequence, the latter exhibit much greater disparities between the composition of their electorates and that of their leaders, as we have demonstrated above (tables 5-4 and 5-6). On the whole, then, we conclude that in ecology parties social and demographic conditions have only a very limited influence on the recruitment of party leaders, particularly that of elected officers.

Organizational Determinants of Leadership Recruitment

How do patterns of participation in local and national party affairs or in social movements affect office holding? For those militants who have already been party executives or municipal councillors, our questionnaire does not permit us to determine whether their profile of intraparty activism is a cause of a consequence of office holding. For the candidates in the 1985 parliamentary elections who had just been nominated before our questionnaire was circulated, however, we are able to analyze past activism as a cause of leadership recruitment.

Table 8-3 provides bivariate correlations between political office and the militants' past and present political activism. Most of these variables

Table 8-2 Professional Employment and Position in the Party Leadership
(in percentages)

	Party executive office		Elected municipal office		Candidates in the 1985 elections	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Legal, administrative, and business services	14 (10) ^a	16 (29)	27 (15)	12 (24)	18 (11)	14 (28)
Education, health, and cultural services	39 (27)	40 (75)	46 (26)	38 (76)	46 (28)	38 (74)
Extractive and manufacturing industries	24 (17)	17 (32)	16 (9)	20 (40)	18 (11)	19 (38)
No occupation exercised	23 (16)	27 (50)	11 (6)	30 (60)	18 (11)	28 (55)
Total	100 (70)	100 (186)	100 (56)	100 (200)	100 (61)	99 (195)
Index of dissimilarity between office and nonoffice holders	14		46		23	

^aNumber of cases in brackets.

appear to influence officeholding only marginally, but there are some important exceptions. Overall, the table reveals several interesting differences between the patterns of activism that are associated with specific political offices as well as between Agalev and Ecolo.

As one might expect, party executives are most preoccupied with national party affairs. At least Agalev’s executives are distinctly less likely to be focused on local politics than other militants and spend relatively less time on social movement organizing. Before joining

Table 8-3 Patterns of Political Participation and Leadership Positions
(Kendall's Tau-B)

	Party executive office		Elected (municipal) office		Candidates in the 1985 elections	
	Agalev	Ecolo	Agalev	Ecolo	Agalev	Ecolo
<i>Political background experiences</i>						
Membership in the party's precursor organization	+.10 (149)	+.16 (90)	+.06 (149)	+.21* (90)	+.17* (148)	+.28** (88)
Affiliation with social movement organizations before joining party	+.21** (162)	+.22* (94)	+.23*** (162)	+.26** (94)	+.16* (161)	+.20* (93)
Participation in protest events	+.20*** (161)	+.24** (94)	+.02 (161)	+.23*** (94)	+.16* (160)	+.20* (93)
<i>Entry into the party</i>						
Membership duration	+.14(*) (162)	+.12 (94)	+.16** (162)	+.25** (94)	+.01 (161)	+.26** (93)
Number of friends in the party	+.29*** (154)	-.05 (91)	+.06 (154)	+.02 (91)	-.04 (153)	+.17(*) (91)
<i>Intraparty activism</i>						
National party activism	+.42*** (162)	+.27** (93)	+.05 (162)	+.37*** (93)	+.04 (161)	+.23* (91)
Localism	-.31*** (162)	-.02 (93)	+.14(*) (162)	-.12 (92)	.00 (161)	+.02 (92)
More movement than party activism	-.15(*) (160)	+.02 (91)	-.08 (160)	-.08 (91)	+.10 (159)	.00 (90)
Party executive office	—	—	+.13(*) (162)	+.20* (94)	+.08 (161)	+.25** (93)

(*) $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

ecology parties, however, both Agalev and Ecolo executives were more active in social movement organizations and also more likely to be members of the parties' precursor organizations. In Agalev, moreover, party executives distinguish themselves through longer party membership and more friendship ties inside the party.

On the whole, Agalev's executives differ in more respects from the rank-and-file militants attending the party conferences than Ecolo's.¹³ In part, this finding may be a methodological artifact due to the greater participation of pure localists in Agalev party conferences. In Ecolo the leadership does not stand out so much because conference attendance is confined to a much more select circle (see chapter 7). Our finding, however, may also signal a true distinctiveness of Agalev's executive which we will pursue further when we examine the leadership's ideology.

Municipal councillors and candidates for electoral office in Agalev and Ecolo exhibit a pattern precisely opposite to that we observed among party executives in Agalev and Ecolo. Ecolo's elected municipal leaders and its candidates for the 1985 parliamentary elections are considerably more distinguished from the party rank and file than their colleagues with similar positions in Agalev. Ecolo's leaders are more likely to have already belonged to the party's precursor organization and to social movement groups in the past. They have been in the party longer than others and are more integrated into political friendship networks. Finally the overlap between party and electoral office is much higher in Ecolo than in Agalev. In contrast, Agalev's candidates for the 1985 national elections represent quite literally a cross-section of all party activists attending the 1985 preelection conference, with the slight exception that candidates were marginally more active in movement organizations before joining their party and more likely to have been members of the party's precursor organization.

Our data demonstrate that, compared to Agalev, Ecolo has a more tightly knit political elite in which involvement in the party's precursor organization, bonds of friendship, and overlapping leadership positions reinforce each other. Moreover, all participants in the party elite focus on the national political level, whereas in Agalev this is the case only among party executives. This finding is fully consistent with our investigation into Agalev's and Ecolo's patterns of participation and power structures, where we argued that Ecolo is clearly the more centralized party (chapter 7).

Differences between Agalev's and Ecolo's selection criteria for the 1985 parliamentary candidates also come to the fore when we ask mili-

Table 8-4 What Is Important and Has Priority as a Criterion in the Nomination of Parliamentary Candidates on “Electable” Positions in Agalev and Ecolo? (in percentages)

	Agalev		Ecolo	
	(Very) important ^a	First or second priority	(Very) important ^a	First or second priority
<i>Personal qualities</i>				
Age	21	2	9	0
Personal popularity	36	3	30	13
Total	57	5	39	13
<i>Social movement representation</i>				
Being a woman	50	12	27	5
Movement activism	63	26	52	18
Total	113	38	79	23
<i>Party loyalty</i>				
Duration of membership	38	10	43	14
Support by local sections	82	43	51	19
Total	120	53	94	33
<i>Political professionalism</i>				
Political expertise	54	27	72	36
Being well-known in the party	92	74	99	94
Total	136	101	171	130

^aSum of percentage scores on the top two values of a five-point scale.

tants to indicate the importance and priority of eight criteria to nominate a militant for a parliamentary seat (table 8-4). The criteria are divided into four groups. First, personal characteristics such as age and personal popularity are clearly the least important selection criteria in both parties. Next, the involvement of candidates in social movements or their representativeness of a specific constituency (being a woman) is very important in Agalev. These “movementist” recruitment criteria, however, are much less relevant in Ecolo. Conversely, the third and fourth criteria referring to the activists’ internal performance within the party, and here primarily to attributes of political professionalism (political expertise,

Table 8-5 Organizational and Movementist Determinants of Nominations for “Electable” Positions

	Agalev		Ecolo	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
1. Personal qualities				
1.1 Age	+ .15	+ .27** ^b	− .02	(ns)
1.2 Many friends in the party	+ .01	(ns)	− .06	(ns)
2. Movement representation				
2.1 Being a woman	− .09	(ns)	− .27	− .21* ^a
2.2 Present movement affiliation	+ .01	(ns)	.00	(ns)
3. Organizational loyalty				
3.1 Membership duration	+ .02	(ns)	+ .07	(ns)
3.2 Factor local party activism	+ .01	+ .03	+ .05	+ .12 (ns) ^a
4. Professional recruitment				
4.1 Education	+ .04	(ns)	− .11	(ns)
4.2 National party activism	.00	(ns)	+ .05	(ns)
4.3 National party office	+ .05	(ns)	+ .22	+ .23* ^a
Adjusted R ²	.03 (ns) (N = 120)		.14* (N = 74)	

(*) $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$
^aSignificant at the $p \leq .10$ level in a Logit regression on electoral candidacy.
^bSignificant at the $p \leq .05$ level in a Logit regression on electoral candidacy.

being known in the party) rather than local organizational loyalty (duration of membership, endorsement by the local party section), appear more important to Ecolo militants than to their Agalev colleagues. The contrast between Agalev and Ecolo illustrates yet again Ecolo’s more closed and hierarchical structure, whereas Agalev’s militants are more willing to accept rather unconventional nomination criteria.

We can now match the militants’ subjective rating and ranking of the eight criteria with survey data on the electoral candidates revealing whether the attributes considered to be relevant indeed affect militants’ chances to be nominated for a promising position on the parties’ electoral lists (table 8-5). In Agalev none of the selection criteria, with the exception of age, has a noticeable effect on the recruitment outcome. In Ecolo, however, holding national executive office significantly improves chances of being nominated for parliament, showing that Ecolo indeed puts more emphasis on criteria of political professionalism and elite control than Agalev. This interpretation is also confirmed by the fact that

Table 8-6 Ideological Dispositions and Leadership Position

	Party executive office	
	Agalev	Ecolo
<i>Policy and strategy</i>		
Anticapitalism	+ .08 (160)	− .32*** (94)
Postmodern deep ecology	+ .03 (160)	+ .06 (94)
Strategic radicalism	+ .19* (148)	− .05 (82)
<i>Group adherence</i>		
Ideologues	+ .30*** (162)	− .09 (94)
Lobbyists	+ .01 (162)	+ .11 (94)
Pragmatists	− .16* (162)	− .02 (94)
(*) $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$		

being a woman clearly depresses chances of being nominated in Ecolo but not in Agalev.

Organizational recruitment patterns buttress our argument that Agalev has a more pluralist, open, and democratic recruitment process than Ecolo, at least for all electoral offices. The difference between Agalev and Ecolo, of course, is consistent with our prediction that parties in an environment with a more mobilized left-libertarian cleavage attract more ideologues and lobbyists who, in turn, put greater emphasis on internal diversity and democracy in the party.

Ideology and Opportunity in Leadership Recruitment

Up to this point our investigation has established that Agalev has a more democratic process of recruiting party leaders. Ecolo can still be perfectly democratic in terms of the substantive policies endorsed by its leadership. We will now examine the correspondence between the leaders' and followers' beliefs in each party in order to determine how

Elected (municipal)
office

Candidates
in the 1985 elections

Agalev

Ecolo

Agalev

Ecolo

-.10

-.10

-.07

-.04

(160)

(94)

(159)

(93)

-.07

.00

-.10

-.12

(160)

(94)

(159)

(93)

+.21**

+.08

-.01

-.10

(148)

(82)

(147)

(82)

-.08

-.17(*)

-.02

-.17*

(162)

(94)

(161)

(93)

+.13(*)

+.13 (p = .21)

+.04

+.17 (p = .11)

(162)

(94)

(161)

(93)

+.14*

.00

+.00

+.07

(162)

(94)

(161)

(93)

representative party leaders are. In table 8-6 we have listed bivariate correlations between office holding in each party and the three most important general indicators of political orientation we have employed in chapter 4: anticapitalism, postmodern deep ecology positions, and strategic radicalism. Moreover, we can estimate whether belonging to the ideologues, lobbyists, or pragmatists affects a militant's chances of becoming a party executive, municipal councillor, or parliamentary candidate.

In Agalev party executives are considerably more likely to be ideologues than all other party members and officeholders. They also are slightly more anticapitalist and postmodern and support substantially more radical strategies than any other intraparty group. In Ecolo, in contrast, party executives distinguish themselves ideologically only in one respect from the rank and file: they are considerably less anticapitalist than their followers.

The difference between the parties is not difficult to explain. In Agalev, located in an environment with higher left-libertarian mobilization, more ideologues join the party (chapters 3 and 5). Ideologues, in

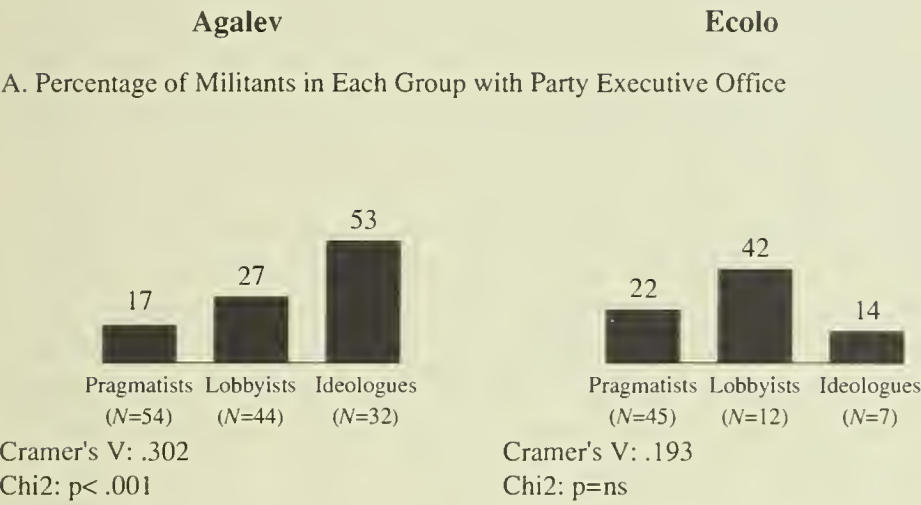
turn, are more interested in the “big” issues of national party policy and strategy than lobbyists and pragmatists (chapter 7). Among national leadership positions, executive office controls the least political resources (authority, access to the mass media, salary) and attracts the least rank-and-file attention, particularly among lobbyists and pragmatists with a local orientation, whereas nominations for electoral candidates involve the entire spectrum of party activists. Hence, Agalev ideologues stand a better chance to be elected to party executives than would correspond to their share in the overall population of party militants. In Ecolo, however, pragmatists have overwhelming control at all levels of the party organization and cut back on the share of radicals who manage to win party executive office.

In both parties municipal councillors and parliamentary candidates are generally representative of the rank and file. In Agalev lobbyists and pragmatists are somewhat overrepresented among municipal elected officers, a tendency easily attributed to the limited interest of ideologues in local politics. Nevertheless, Agalev’s municipal councillors are strategically more radical than the rank and file and even in Ecolo a similar, though insignificant, tendency is indicated by our data. For this puzzling finding we can offer only an ad hoc interpretation. Since most Belgian municipal councils are dominated by broad coalitions of conventional political parties and since the local level has very little autonomy in the comparatively centralized Belgian administration, even moderate ecology party representatives in city councils may conclude that coalitions with established parties would not enhance their chances to implement ecological policies.

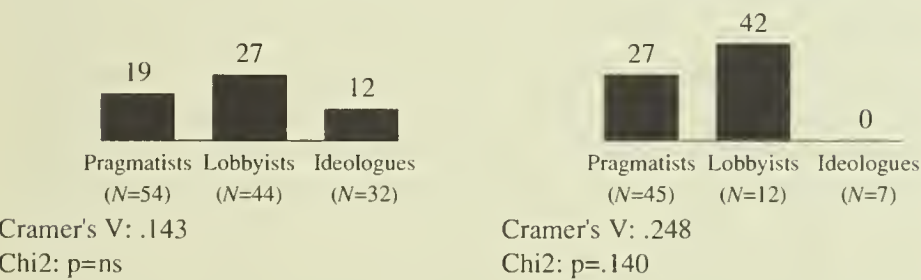
In both parties, elected officers and parliamentary candidates tend to support less anticapitalist and postmodern positions. In Ecolo, at least, this tendency leads to a pronounced underrepresentation of ideologues in these offices. The party is able to exclude a dissenting minority from political office. The selective patterns of leadership access to party and electoral office become more visible when we estimate the percentage of Agalev and Ecolo activists in each intraparty group who hold leadership positions (figure 8-1).

In Agalev ideologues are most likely to become party executives but have slightly fewer opportunities to reach elected office than other party activists. In Ecolo, in contrast, ideologues are underrepresented on the party executives and excluded from all electoral offices. The ideologues’ exclusion from the political leadership had serious consequences for Ecolo. Only a few months after circulating our questionnaire, Ecolo experienced a deep split over strategic issues which precipitated the

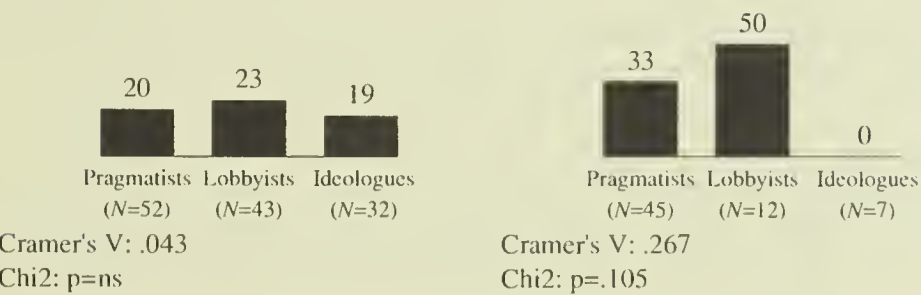
Figure 8-1 Leadership Office and Political Orientation in Agalev and Ecolo (in percentages)



B. Percentage of Militants in Municipal Elected Office



C. Percentage of Militants Who Are Candidates for Parliamentary Seats in 1985



departure of many ideologues from the party and the formation of a new more radical leftist, but electorally insignificant, ecology party in Brussels.

Figure 8-1 reveals that in both parties lobbyists appear to be most favorably positioned to gain local electoral office or national nominations.¹⁴ Two reasons may explain their outstanding opportunities. First, the lobbyists' proven activism in social movement organizations carries political prestige that promotes their candidacy, at least when it is combined with other qualities, such as satisfactory intraparty activism. Lobbyists represent the constituencies whose demands ecology parties wish to voice most directly in the arena of electoral competition. Second, these personalities represent intermediate ideological positions and are thus acceptable to a broad spectrum of party activists. Once left-libertarian parties get embroiled in deep factional conflicts about party strategy, however, lobbyists are likely to lose this advantage in the competition for leadership positions.¹⁵

To conclude, Agalev and Ecolo party leaders are quite representative of the main ideological currents characterizing the rank and file in each party, although there are some biases of leadership recruitment. Probably the most important distortion of representativeness is Agalev's party executive. From the perspective of normative democratic theory this observation yields an interesting result. Chapter 7 and the first sections of this chapter have shown that Ecolo tends to be dominated by a smaller, more closely knit elite than Agalev. In Agalev grass-roots participation, or the "procedural" aspect of democracy, is more developed than in Ecolo. The ideological unrepresentativeness of Agalev's party executive, however, demonstrates that more "procedural" democracy does not necessarily translate into more substantive democratic representativeness. In fact, at least in the case of party executives, a trade-off between procedural and representative democracy becomes visible: because militants' access to Agalev's executive is more open and party executives are less subject to the members' surveillance and less accountable than other offices, ideologues with the appropriate ambitions have overproportional chances to be elected. Procedural openness decreases the substantive representativeness of the party leadership and allows a minority to exercise excessive influence.¹⁶

Conclusion

In this chapter we have analyzed how sociological background characteristics, patterns of extra- and intraparty participation, and belief sys-

tems influence the Agalev and Ecolo militants' chances to gain leadership positions. Sociological variables such as age, education and income have little direct impact on the selection of leaders. Yet municipal councillors and candidates for the 1985 elections had a significantly higher occupational status than the average party militant. Patterns of participation and political orientation revealed significantly different consequences for the recruitment procedures and outcomes in Agalev and Ecolo. The activists' involvement in the party's precursor organizations, national affairs, and friendship networks is significantly more associated with leadership positions in Ecolo than in Agalev. We have interpreted these connections as a further indicator that Agalev realizes a more open, participatory party democracy than Ecolo and confines office holding less to a small core group of "all-round activists." This interparty difference can again be understood as a consequence of Flanders' more intense left-libertarian social mobilization which has led more ideologues and lobbyists into the party than can be observed in the Walloon Ecolo.

Our analysis of ideology and leadership position, however, clearly shows that more "procedural" democracy in Agalev does not necessarily translate into greater "substantive" representativeness of rank-and-file preferences by the party leadership. In fact, it is Ecolo, the procedurally more "oligarchic" party, that produces a greater correspondence between the beliefs of leaders and followers. Differential mobilization of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists in national party affairs explains why in a more mobilized, procedurally democratic party such as Agalev at least positions on the party executive can be captured by more ideologues than would correspond to their share among rank-and-file militants.

Our finding sheds light on the applicability of the widely discussed "law" of curvilinear disparity between party "leaders" and "activists." The leader/follower disparity depends on the composition of a party's rank and file who constitute a horizontally and vertically stratified conglomerate of militants, not a uniform mass of zealots. Our study demonstrates that curvilinear disparities will occur, if a sufficient number of ideologues has joined a party and if these ideologues can seize on opportunities to capture less highly valued positions, such as the party executives. Nevertheless, as the comparison of Agalev and Ecolo demonstrates, the appearance of ideological disparities hinges upon a number of contingencies, such as cleavage mobilization in a party's environment and the structure of party organization, showing that curvilinear disparities hardly represent an immutable "law" of party politics.

9 Conclusion: Beyond the Conventional European Left

If the Belgian ecology parties Agalev and Ecolo constituted only two highly peculiar and small parties receiving less than half a million votes in a comparatively small European country, they would have little significance for studies of political parties and of European politics beyond a small community of specialists in Belgian politics. Yet we have argued from the outset that our investigation has broader theoretical and substantive ramifications. In the first place we have attempted to show the applicability of a more encompassing theory of intraparty organization that does not pay attention only to the constraints of the electoral marketplace and the institutional rules of a polity, but also the militants' political ideas and practices, as well as the social mobilization of political demands in civil society. Second, our study provides a significant piece of evidence in support of the broader conten-

tion that European politics is qualitatively changing in the 1970s and 1980s, both in terms of the process of interest representation within parties as well as the nature of the ideas and demands that are reflected in the party systems. Agalev and Ecolo are examples of a broader cohort of left-libertarian parties that have experienced considerable electoral success in a number of European democracies. While these parties do not subscribe to all traditional ideas of the left, they must nevertheless be considered as a consequence of the anticapitalist legacy of European politics. In this sense these parties are “beyond” the left. They build on conventional leftist ideas but transcend them through new visions and political practices. These are the themes we would like to elaborate in our conclusion.

Parties as Coalitions of Activists

Our study has demonstrated conceptual and empirical ways to analyze the formation of groups and (sub)coalitions within parties that avoid two pitfalls. On the one hand, empirical studies have often confined themselves to the identification of a multiplicity of factions, currents, groups, and ideological tendencies in parties and have offered few propositions that would explain the internal ideological texture of parties or account for differences among parties. On the other hand, theoretically more parsimonious, explanatory approaches in the rational choice literature have reduced intraparty politics to a few vague abstractions that are often void of empirical content, such as the alleged conflict between party “activists” and “leaders.” Rational choice perspectives build on an unrealistic psychology of political activism, do not take into account the power of ideas and of social mobilization, and lack a precise account of the institutional settings in which parties act. As a consequence, they cannot satisfactorily explain the internal dynamic and strategy formation in political parties. Nor can they account for basic differences in the organization and composition of parties which operate under similar electoral constraints, such as is the case with Agalev and Ecolo.

Our approach has conceptualized party dynamics in ways that go beyond inductive empirical descriptions of party activists and preserve some explanatory parsimony but steer clear of the more simplistic and unfounded theoretical premises shared by much of the public choice literature on parties. To overcome the descriptivism of the behavioral literature, we have introduced analytical distinctions between intraparty groups that are not identical with and do not refer to self-styled factions and tendencies within parties. In the empirical analysis we found that

party members cannot be divided into a solid mass of activists, pitted against a uniform leadership, but that it is fruitful to distinguish between ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists because these orientations explain a wide variety of patterns of political behavior as well as strategic and policy preferences among party activists. Moreover, we showed that the relative strength of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists interacts with the organizational and strategic dynamic of parties. Finally, we demonstrated that differences in the political composition of parties representing similar broad ideas can be understood in terms of contextual and institutional conditions that lead to a differential recruitment of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists into party politics.

With respect to the individual background, political experiences, and outlooks of ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists in the Belgian ecology parties, we found remarkable differences. Ideologues are younger, more likely to be male, and more educated than other party activists. They also more frequently approach ecology parties through a “leftist” political career with participation in the student movement, voting for radical left parties, and high participation in protest events. These experiences shape militants’ participation in party politics. Ideologues are more likely to be national party activists, take more leftist policy positions, advocate more radical antielectoralist party strategies, and are more inclined to subscribe to a strong version of Michels’s oligarchy theory than lobbyists or pragmatists. At least in Agalev ideologues have greater chances to win party executive office. Pragmatists represent almost a mirror image of the ideologues’ background, experiences, involvement, and ability to gain political office. They tend to be older, less educated, less involved in radical protest activities, and more concerned about local politics. Lobbyists, finally, stand out through a long-term career in social movements but waver between ideologues and pragmatists in their political stances. Maybe for this reason they have slightly superior capabilities to secure nominations for parliamentary seats.

Our definition of the three subgroups in chapter 3 was guided by theoretical premises and hypotheses which have been more or less confirmed by our empirical analysis. There is, however, another more inductive method to construct party subgroups by entering all variables characterizing the militants’ social and political background, their movement practices, their involvement in party affairs, and their political ideology into a principal component analysis. We will now employ this method as a device for construct validation: do the most powerful principal components reproduce the group divisions we have postulated

theoretically? For the first principal component table 9-1 represents all variables we have entered in the analysis together with their eigenvector scores, whereas for subsequent components we include only those yielding at least a score of .20.

It is evident that component 1 divides ideologues from pragmatists. All the attributes we have associated with ideologues score positively on component 1. Involvement in protest events, a key experience separating ideologues and pragmatists in chapters 6 through 8, loads strongest on this component, followed by national activism and participation in the student movement. Thereafter, we find all elements of the radical ideological syndrome (discontent with party democracy, leftist self-placement, postmodern deep ecology, strategic radicalism, and anti-capitalism) as well as involvement in movement organizations. Component 2 distinguishes between lobbyists and nonlobbyists in ecology parties. Those who are strongly involved in social movement organizations are relatively less active in the parties but organizationally more content. They also tend to be somewhat less secular than other party activists. The fact that component 2 does not load on ideology variables underlines the lobbyists' intermediate position. It is worth pointing out that none of the social background variables (age, gender, education) loads strongly on the main dimensions, thus confirming our assertion that they are irrelevant for the analysis of intraparty groups.

Sections B and C of table 9-1 detail other, less important components resulting from the principal component analysis. Although they do not directly relate to our theoretical framework, they highlight some intriguing relationships which briefly deserve our attention. Components 3 and 4 in section B draw attention to further secondary divisions of ideology and political practice in ecology parties. They show that not all localists are moderate but that there are also radical undercurrents at the periphery of the parties which are not reflected in our main division between localist pragmatists and national ideologues. Moreover, these components make us sensitive to the complex configurations in which views on economic governance and sociocultural modernity or postmodernity can be intertwined. They underline the multidimensionality of the left-libertarian ecological discourse which we have emphasized in chapter 4.

Section C of table 9-1 identifies intraparty divisions based on ascriptive attributes, such as age and gender. Component 5 separates female radicals from male moderates. Component 8 divides female moderates from male radicals. Gender cleavages thus play only a very minor role in ecology parties when we examine the militants' political behavior and ideological outlook. In components 6 and 7 age is associated with more

Table 9-1 Intraparty Groups in Agalev and Ecolo: A Principal Component Test**A. Ideologues, Lobbyists, and Pragmatists**

Principal component 1: Ideologues vs. pragmatists		Principal component 2: Lobbyists vs. nonlobbyists	
Involvement in protest events	+ .43	Present affiliation with movements	+ .56
National party activism	+ .37	Past affiliation with movements	+ .49
Participation in student movement	+ .28	More movement than party activism	+ .49
Organizational discontent	+ .28	Secularization	– .27
Localism	– .28	Organizational discontent	– .24
Leftist self-placement	+ .26	Eigenvalue	2.09
Postmodern deep ecology	+ .26	Explained variance	11.60%
Past affiliation with movements	+ .25		
Present affiliation with movements	+ .22		
Strategic radicalism	+ .20		
Elite control as obstacle to democracy	+ .19		
Secularization	+ .19		
Anticapitalism	+ .17		
Age	– .16		
Member lethargy as obstacle to democracy	– .12		
Education	+ .10		
Being female	– .06		
More movement than party activism	+ .06		
Eigenvalue	2.80		
Explained variance	15.60%		

B. Second-Order Ideological Divisions

Principal component 3: Modern anticapitalist localists vs. liberal national reformists		Principal component 4: Postmodern anticapitalist localists vs. liberal national reformists	
Strategic radicalism	+ .41	National party activism	– .44
Elite control as obstacle to democracy	+ .39	Leftist self-placement	+ .40
Localism	+ .31	Postmodern deep ecologists	+ .39
Member lethargy as obstacle to democracy	– .31	Localism	+ .34
Anticapitalism	+ .31	Anticapitalism	+ .31
Organizational discontent	+ .28	Age	– .27
Secularization	– .25	Secularization	+ .21
National party activism	– .24	Eigenvalue	1.51
Education	– .24	Explained variance	8.41%
Postmodern deep ecology	– .22		
Eigenvalue	1.95		
Explained variance	10.87%		

Table 9-1 Continued

C. Ascriptive Group Divisions: Gender

Principal component 5: Female radicals vs. male moderates		Principal component 8: Female moderates vs. male radicals	
Being female	+ .48	Being female	+ .53
Education	− .52	Education	+ .36
Local activism	− .37	Member lethargy as obstacle to	
Anticapitalism	+ .30	democracy	− .36
Elite control as obstacle to		Anticapitalism	− .35
democracy	− .20	Leftist self-placement	− .27
Eigenvalue	1.40	Organizational discontent	− .25
Explained variance	7.77%	Participation in the student	
		movement	+ .23
		Eigenvalue	0.90
		Explained variance	5.00%

D. Ascriptive Group Divisions: Age

Principal component 6: Moderate student movement veterans vs. young radicals		Principal component 7: Older antimodern reformists vs. young anticapitalists	
Participation in the student		Age	+ .44
movement	+ .56	Secularization	+ .39
Age	+ .42	Postmodern deep ecology	+ .31
Member lethargy as obstacle to		Leftist self-placement	− .30
democracy	− .36	Anticapitalism	− .27
Strategic radicalism	− .29	Strategic radicalism	+ .26
Anticapitalism	− .28	Localism	+ .24
Postmodern deep ecology	+ .24	Education	− .24
Organizational discontent	− .21	Past affiliation with movements	+ .23
Leftist self-placement	− .18	Membership lethargy as	
Eigenvalue	1.08	obstacle to democracy	+ .22
Explained variance	5.97%	Eigenvalue	1.02
		Explained variance	5.65%

moderate, less anticapitalist and leftist, but more deep ecologist positions. Component 7 pits older student movement veterans with now more moderate political views against young ecologists pursuing a radical politics. The limited explanatory value of components 6 and 7 shows that age is at best a very minor force shaping the political outlook of left-libertarians.

Overall, we should reiterate that our theoretical framework taps the main divisions inside ecology parties.¹ Ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists are useful concepts to define party subgroups with distinct political careers, experiences, and preference schedules. The analysis of party

subgroups helps us to understand the aggregate behavior of political parties, such as the structure of participation and influence in Agalev and Ecolo, as well as the parties' general policy outlook and electoral strategy. Because Agalev involves relatively more ideologues and lobbyists than Ecolo, it develops a more stratarchal, pluralist, and participatory internal decisionmaking process than Ecolo, which is more governed by an "old guard" of party leaders dominating both the local as well as the national arenas of party politics. At the same time, Agalev's greater procedural openness generates a perverse effect: its party executive is ideologically and behaviorally less representative of the rank-and-file militants than Ecolo's leadership! As we discussed in chapter 8, an interesting trade-off between procedural democracy and substantive political representation becomes visible. More democratic openness may advantage militants who have the greatest zeal and the most personal resources (education, time, friendship networks). This trade-off, however, is confined to "secondary" leadership positions and cannot be detected in the nomination of party candidates for local or national electoral office.

Our analysis of Agalev's and Ecolo's patterns of participation and power relations has also some bearing on Michels's "iron law" of party oligarchy. It shows that the law is not as "iron" as Michels suggested. There is a great deal of variability in the structure of complex voluntary associations, such as parties, and this variability must be explained in terms of the party activists' ideas and demands. We arrive, therefore, at a more "voluntarist" interpretation of organizational imperatives than Michels would welcome. It is certainly true that the complexity of decisionmaking and the scarcity of resources that individuals and organizations can devote to internal communication set definite limits on participatory governance. Yet beyond these constraints, numerous contingencies, such as the militants' political visions, influence the actual distribution of power and participation in political parties that Michels did not consider in the formulation of the "iron law."

The impact of the militants' ideas and aspirations affects the overall ideological orientation and strategy of the Belgian ecology parties. Agalev, the party with a substantial proportion of ideologues and lobbyists, expresses more radical goals and strategies than Ecolo where political pragmatists prevail. Generally, Agalev militants endorse a more anticapitalist, ecological, redistributive, and communitarian political program and insist on more radical electoral strategies than their Ecolo colleagues. These differences are also reflected in the actual practice of the two parties, such as their programs and behavior toward

other parties. For example, when Ecolo explored a coalition with the liberals and Christian democrats in the Francophone region, Agalev frowned upon these efforts.

Agalev has more ideologues and lobbyists than Ecolo because it is located in an environment where the left-libertarian cleavage has greater salience and has led to more political mobilization in terms of social movements and protest events. Since our study is a cross-sectional comparison of parties within the same political regime, we cannot explore other features that we employ in our theoretical framework to explain the relative strength and interaction of party subgroups, such as the institutional opportunities for representation in a political regime, the parties' competitiveness, and the impact of their past policy and electoral performance on the recruitment of activists. Broader cross-national comparative research with a longitudinal component should, however, be able to explore the relevance of these contextual dimensions for the dynamics of political parties.²

The applicability of our theoretical approach may not be confined to left-libertarian parties. We expect that a similar logic of analysis would be helpful to compare the dynamics of all change-oriented political parties. In principle external conditions, intraparty group composition, and party structures are linked to party strategies and policy performance in all parties that intend to reform or replace existing social and political institutions. By definition ideologues are change-seeking political actors. Where parties do not place much emphasis on change, pragmatists will dominate them to an extent that little is left for our group analysis to explain. Empirical research indeed shows that status-quo oriented parties have little ideological and strategic factionalism but more clientelistic divisions (cf. Raschke 1977). Thus, our theoretical model would probably shed not much light on the structure and strategy of status-quo oriented parties. Yet the organization, program, and strategy of change-oriented parties, such as socialist, communist, or ethnolinguistic parties, can be explained by the internal micropolitics of interaction between ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists, which is related to the external political environment (cleavage mobilization, institutional representation, competitiveness), as well as the past history of the parties' policies and strategies.³

The Uniqueness of Left-Libertarian Politics

Our study employed the theoretical tools of intraparty group analysis in order to understand the nature of left-libertarian politics in European

democracies. We have shown that the Belgian parties Agalev and Ecolo go “beyond” the conventional European left. They introduce new political visions that are also more or less reflected in their organizational practices as well as their involvement in social movements. Although the phenomenon of left-libertarian politics is still too recent to draw definite conclusions, it is entirely possible that the new parties are moments of a fundamental, comprehensive *transformation* of the entire left emancipatory discourse in advanced capitalist democracies. Without going into much detail, we would like to conclude with two hypotheses which suggest new avenues for research. First, Agalev’s and Ecolo’s organizational experience in Belgium is not exceptional but reflects broader developments in left-libertarian politics. Second, the advent of left-libertarian parties marks a new structural differentiation in European party systems.⁴

Empirical studies of left-libertarian parties are still uncommon⁵ and in-depth comparative research on the parties’ structures and strategies are all but missing.⁶ Nevertheless, the existing circumstantial evidence suggests that these parties exhibit at least five common features. First, they are small “framework parties” with few members relative to the size of their electorate. Second, they recruit most of their militants from the stratum of young professional “symbol specialists” (Kirkpatrick 1976) working in the (public) personal service sector. Third, they develop little formal organizational structure and are highly permeable to new activists. They tend to be run by small bands of “political entrepreneurs” with strong political commitments but very modest material and status aspirations with respect to their personal life-style. These loose party organizations approximate neither Michels’s bureaucratized oligarchies nor grass-roots democracy but an intermediate type in which fluid, open participation is combined with pluralist leadership.

Fourth, a small membership base and weak formal organization make it impossible to develop strong institutional linkages to the parties’ external clienteles in social movements and pressure groups. As we have seen, most Agalev and Ecolo activists participate in social movement organizations and protest events, yet they represent only a very small fraction of all Belgians who get involved in left-libertarian issue politics. Interviews with party militants reveal that the absence of linkages is not simply an unfortunate consequence of the parties’ immaturity, but follows from left-libertarian beliefs themselves. Since left-libertarians oppose centralized bureaucratic organizations, they also have no base of justification for building new political “pillars” and “mass organiza-

tions” that could constitute the instrumentalities to “encapsulate” their electorates.

Fifth, left-libertarian parties are usually characterized by intense internal conflicts about party strategy and ideology. Compared to other West European left-libertarian parties, both Agalev and Ecolo in Belgium display only a relatively subdued level of conflict. In strategic terms left-libertarian parties face considerable difficulties in choosing between radical strategies of fundamental opposition and alliances with center-left parties, such as socialist, social democratic, and left radical parties. In terms of policy programs most of the internal conflicts revolve around the link between the new cultural, ecological, libertarian, and communitarian leftism all left-libertarian parties endorse and the extent to which “old” leftist demands for economic redistribution and public governance of the economy are included in their demands. Our study demonstrates that this is precisely the dimension which also generates the greatest potential for group conflict within the Belgian ecologists.

Depending on cleavage mobilization, institutional access, and competitiveness, these five features of left-libertarian politics are more or less pronounced within left-libertarian parties. The more external circumstances favor programmatic, strategic, and organizational radicalism, and the greater the actual share of ideologues and lobbyists in the parties, the more sharply these features will distinguish left-libertarian from status-quo oriented parties. This proposition leads to our second hypothesis about a new structural differentiation of European party systems.

Contrary to expectations in the 1960s (Epstein 1967), the mass party model in European politics has not significantly suffered under the impact of voter de-alignment and changed styles of electoral campaigning. In fact, it appears to have spread to conservative parties⁷ and to countries traditionally characterized by organizationally weak framework parties.⁸ It is plausible to explain these developments less by electoral exigencies than by increasing opportunities for party patronage and a gradual penetration of party politics into the traditionally “neutral” public administrations. The party state, particularly in the highly centralized, corporatist democracies, has created new incentives to form bureaucratic mass parties. This phenomenon is obvious in Belgium where mass parties and their organizational affiliates directly control public appointments in numerous policy sectors (de Winter 1981; Huyse 1984). As a consequence, the past “ideological” motivations to join conventional political parties are gradually crumbling away and are

replaced by material and institutional incentives (Billiet 1984; Billiet and Huyse 1984). Yet similar developments can be observed in many other Western democracies.

On the left the ideological reorientation away from a collectivist statism toward left-libertarian communitarian visions leads to a reassessment of centralized party structures. Left-libertarian parties, such as Agalev and Ecolo, are only the most advanced examples of such tendencies which have also surfaced inside established social democratic, socialist, and communist left parties. Typical indicators are a stagnation and decline of party membership and participation in organizational life, the influx of an increasing number of activists who define their political radicalism not in the tradition of working-class politics and its organizational correlates, but in terms of left-libertarian programs and political practices, and growing intraparty factionalism dividing these new ideological forces from the supporters of traditional socialist programs.⁹ While the status-quo oriented parties of the right move toward more bureaucratic entrenchment and mass organization, it is the traditional mass parties of the left which are threatened by new challenges to their party organization. In this sense the study of left-libertarian politics in Agalev and Ecolo reflects dynamic forces in European politics that reach far beyond the comparatively small and inexperienced ecology parties. Agalev and Ecolo are only empirical tracers of a more comprehensive new polarization in European party systems. Going beyond the conventional left may eventually precipitate a transformation of the entire left.

Appendix I

Glossary of the Key Variables

We will not repeat the definition of variables and indices described in the text of this book but list the central passages where they are introduced, the major tables and figures in which they are used, and the corresponding questions in our survey.

I. Variables relating to the militants' beliefs and orientations (chapters 3 and 4)

Variable name	Page reference	Tables and figures	Question in the survey
Anticapitalism	74–83	Tables 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-11	50
Intraparty groups (ideologues, lobbyists and ideologues)	17–18, 59–61	Tables 3-9, 4-7, 4-8, 4-10, 6-7, 7-10, 8-6, figures 5-1, 6-1, 7-1, 7-2, 8-1	25 (index) 42 (index) 51
Left-right self-placement	54–56, 78–83	Tables 3-4, 4-5, 4-8, 4-11	51
Obstacles to Party Democracy. See Section III of the Glossary			
Organizational discontent	49–53	Tables 3-1, 3-2, figure 3-1	42 (index)
Power of party organs, Evaluation. See Organizational Discontent. See also Power of Party Organs. Factual Assessment in Section III of the Glossary			
Postmaterialism	66–67	Table 4-1	52
Postmodern deep ecology	75–83	Tables 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-11	50
Salience of left and right in Green politics	55–56, 69, 78–80	Tables 3-5, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5, 4-11	50.4
Strategic radicalism	86–89	Tables 4-9, 4-10, 4-11	48, 49
Sympathy for political parties	56–57	Tables 3-6, 3-7	23

II. Variables relating to the militants' sociodemographic background and political experiences outside their parties (chapters 5 and 6)

Variable name	Page reference	Tables and figures	Question in the survey
Age	102, 112–13	Tables 6-1, 6-2, figure 5-1	5
Education	99–100, 112–13	Tables 5-4, 6-1, 6-2, figure 5-1	9
Gender	102	Table 6-1	6
Income	101	Table 5-5	14
Occupation	103–5, 176–77	Tables 5-6, 8-2	13
Past leftist voting. Index	95–97, 111–12	Tables 5-2, 6-1, 6-2, figures 6-1, 6-2	17, 22 (index)
Past membership in social movement organizations. Index	117–18	Tables 6-5, figures 6-1, 6-2	27
Present membership in social movement organizations. Index	58–59, 113–15, 117–18	Tables 3-8, 6-3, 6-5, figure 6-2	25
Precursor organizations. Membership in <i>Anders Gaan Leven</i> or Friends of the Earth	111–12	Table 6-1, figures 6-1, 6-2	24.2
Protest events. Index of participation	115–16	Tables 6-4, 6-5, figures 6-1, 6-2	24.1, 24.3
Secularism/church attendance	96–98, 112–13	Tables 5-3, 6-1, 6-2, figures 6-1, 6-2	16
Student movement. Membership	112–13	Tables 6-1, 6-2, figures 6-1, 6-2	29
Voting preferences before Agalev and Ecolo were founded (parents and militants)	95–97, 112–13	Table 5-1	17, 22

III. Variables relating to the militants' participation in party affairs, perception of power structures, and organizational careers (chapters 7 and 8)

Variable name	Page reference	Tables and figures	Question in the survey
Candidates for the 1985 parliamentary elections	171	Tables 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-5, 8-6, figure 8-1	33.1
Criteria for leadership recruitment	179–80	Tables 8-4, 8-5	44, 45
Duration of party membership	134		2
Elected party representatives, municipal councillors	171	Tables 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-6, figure 8-1	34
Elite control theory of party oligarchy	52–53, 161–65	Tables 3-3, 4-11, 7-12, 7-13, figure 7-2	47.2, 47.5
Friends in the party	134		30
Local party activism	137–38	Tables 7-3, 7-6	36.1
Localists	137–38	Table 7-3	36.1, 36.2
Localism: more local than national activism	144–45	Table 7-8, figure 7-1	36.1, 36.2
Membership lethargy theory of party oligarchy	90–91, 161–65	Tables 4-11, 7-12, 7-13, figure 7-2	47.3, 47.4
More movement than party activism	138–39	Table 7-4, figure 7-1	26
National party activism	137–38	Tables 7-3, 7-6, 7-7, figure 7-1	36.2
Participation in individual party organs	139–41	Tables 7-5, 7-6	35
Party executives	171	Tables 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-6, figure 8-1	32
Power of party organs. Factual assessment	152–58	Tables 7-9, 7-10, 7-11	41
Transaction cost theory of party oligarchy	161–65	Tables 7-12, 7-13, figure 7-2	47.1, 47.6

Appendix II

Questionnaire

1. Are you a member of Agalev/Ecolo? (yes/no)
2. In which year, and, if possible, in about which month, did you become a party member? (month/year)
3. Are you member of a local group? (yes/no)
 - 3.1. Which one? (name)
4. Which regional party organization do you belong to? (name)
5. In which year were you born?
6. Sex (male/female)
7. Do you live with a spouse or a friend? (yes/no)
8. Do you have children? (yes/no)
 - 8.1. Number of children

9. What education have you received or are still receiving?
- 1—primary education
 - 2—secondary education
 - 3—secondary professional or technical education
 - 4—higher secondary education
 - 5—higher secondary technical or professional education
 - 6—higher nonuniversity education
 - 7—university education
 - 8—other
10. What is the highest educational degree one of your parents has received? (same list as question 9)
11. In which educational network have you received your last degree?
- 1—public education
 - 2—free [religious] education
 - 3—other
12. In which field have you received or are in the process of acquiring a diploma? (name field)
13. What is your occupation or main activity. (You would help us by giving a maximum of possible details. If you are student, unemployed, homemaker, or retiree, please indicate.) (description of activity)
- 13.1. Are you self-employed or employed?
- 1—self-employed
 - 2—employed
 - 3—other
14. What is your monthly net income? We do not ask for the family income but the income you receive personally.
- 0—no income
 - 1—less than 25,000 francs
 - 2—between 25,000 and 35,000 francs
 - 3—between 35,000 and 50,000 francs
 - 4—between 50,000 and 75,000 francs
 - 5—more than 75,000 francs
- 14.1. If you report no personal income, what is the take-home pay of the family member who earns the most? (scale as in question 14)
15. Regardless of the education you have received, do you consider yourself now as

- 1—a Catholic
 - 2—a Christian beyond the Church
 - 3—disinterested
 - 4—nonbeliever
 - 5—belonging to another religion which is . . .
16. Do you go to the Sunday church service?
- 1—several times per month
 - 2—about once per month
 - 3—less than once per month
 - 4—only on high holy days and special occasions
 - 5—never
17. For which parties did your parents generally vote before Agalev and Ecolo appeared on the scene? (For each of your parents indicate no more than two parties) (list of Belgian parties for father and mother)
18. How often have you moved during the past five years over a distance of more than ten kilometers? (give number of moves)
19. Are you a member of a union or of a similar professional association? (list of organizations)
20. To which health insurance do you belong?
- 1—Catholic
 - 2—socialist
 - 3—liberal
 - 4—other
21. Do you read one or several newspapers at least three times per week? (yes/no)
- 21.1. Which one(s)?
22. Before getting to know Agalev/Ecolo, for which party did you vote generally? (Do not indicate more than two parties) (list of parties)
23. We would like to know what is your present view of the other political parties. Please remark each time whether you find a party extremely sympathetic, very sympathetic, more sympathetic, neutral, more unsympathetic, very unsympathetic, or extremely unsympathetic. Please indicate whether a party is unknown to you. (list of parties, each to be rated on a seven-point scale ranging from extremely sympathetic = 1 to extremely unsympathetic = 7)
24. Have you participated in one of the following demonstrations?
- 24.1. The women's days of November 11 (yes/no)

- 24.2. The gatherings of "Friends of the Earth/Anders Gaan Leven" (yes/no)
- 24.3. The demonstrations against the missiles in Brussels (yes/no)
- 24.4. The Florennade 1985 (yes/no)
- 24.5. Demonstrations against nuclear power (e.g. Huy 1983) (yes/no)
- 24.6. The May 1 processions (yes/no)
- 24.7. The youth march for employment (1982 or 1984) (yes/no)
25. In which groups, committees, organizations, etc. (local or otherwise) outside Agalev/Ecolo are you active? Being active means that you regularly participate in the activities of the group. Indicate each time the name of the group, whether you have been active before joining Agalev/Ecolo, whether you have a responsible function, even if, as in many small groups, it is not a formal office.
 - 25.1. Feminist group or organization (give name, joining before/after party affiliation, office)
 - 25.2. Environmental group or organization (same information as 25.1.)
 - 25.3. Third World or immigrant group or organization (same information as 25.1.)
 - 25.4. Group or organization close to the workers' movement (same information as 25.1.)
 - 25.5. Pacifist group or organization (same information as 25.1.)
 - 25.6. Other group, please describe briefly its nature (same information as 25.1.)
26. If you compare your engagement for Agalev/Ecolo with that for all the other groups taken together, do you spend then for Agalev/Ecolo
 - 1—much more time
 - 2—more time
 - 3—as much time
 - 4—less time
 - 5—much less time
 - 0—not applicable, not member of any other group
27. Return now a little into the past. Indicate the name of groups in which you have been active formerly but are no longer now, the years in which you stopped your active participation, and whether you had a responsible function, even if, as in many small groups, it was not a formal office. (same list of options as in question 25)

28. Before joining Agalev/Ecolo, had you already been a member of another party?
 - 28.1. If yes, which one(s)? (name)
29. Were you active in the 1960s and 1970s in what one calls the “student protest movement”? (yes/no)
 - 29.1. If yes, were you a member of a student protest association?
 - 29.2. If yes, which one(s)?
30. When you joined Agalev/Ecolo, did you already have friends there you would meet regularly?
31. Thinking about your best friends, do you find that there are none, few, a certain number, or many among them in Agalev/Ecolo?
 - 1—none
 - 2—few
 - 3—a certain number
 - 4—many
32. Have you already been or are still now a member of the party steering committee (stuurgroep/conseil federal) or of the party executive (uitvoerend komite/secretariat federal)? (yes/no)
33. If yes, have you or are you participating regularly in the meetings of these organs?
 - 1—regularly
 - 2—less regularly
 - 3—never
33. Are you placed on Agalev’s/Ecolo’s electoral list for the elections in October? (yes/no)
 - 33.1. If yes, is this a position considered to be electable for parliament (the chamber or the senate) (yes/no)
34. Do you exercise a political mandate for Agalev/Ecolo (such as membership of the municipal council, the provincial council, or parliament) (yes/no)
35. Do you participate always, most of the time, regularly, from time to time, or never in the meetings of the following organs:
 - 35.1. National party conference (five-point scale from [almost] always = 1 to [almost] never = 5)
 - 35.2. National steering group (scale as 35.1.)
 - 35.3. National party executive (scale as 35.1.)
 - 35.4. Your local party section (scale as 35.1.)
 - 35.5. Your regional party group (scale as 35.1.)

36. Do you consider yourself in Agalev/Ecolo as
 - 36.1. Very active, fairly active, little active, not active on the local and regional level (four-point scale)
 - 36.2. Very active, fairly active, little active, not active on the national level (four-point scale)
37. How many members of your local party sections are present at this party conference today? (give number)
 - 37.1. This is
 - 1—almost the entire local group
 - 2—about half of the group
 - 3—less than half, but more than one third of the group
 - 4—less than one third of the group
38. If you compare the members of your local group present at this conference with the members who have not come, are the members present from your group in comparison with those absent
 - 38.1.
 - 1—much older
 - 2—somewhat older
 - 3—of the same age
 - 4—somewhat younger
 - 5—much younger
 - 6—question does not apply since almost entire group is present
 - 38.2. —much more/less educated (same scale as 38.1.)
 - 38.3. —have more, as many, less children
 - 38.4. —much more/less radical (same scale as 38.1.)
 - 38.5. —much more/less active in the local party group (same scale as 38.1.)
39. Has the electoral program proposal discussed at this assembly been discussed in your local group
 - 1—in detail
 - 2—in less detail
 - 3—almost not at all
40. How much time have you personally devoted (individually and in your group, all hours taken together) to the study of the program proposal before arriving at this party conference? (give hours of preparation)
41. What in your view is the *factual influence* of the following organs on the national policy and the internal functioning of Agalev/Ecolo?

- 41.1. Regional assembly, five-point scale from very important (= 1) to very unimportant (= 5)
- 41.2. National steering committee (same scale as 41.1.)
- 41.3. National party executive (same scale as 41.1.)
- 41.4. National party secretariat (same scale as 41.1.)
- 41.5. National parliamentary party group (same scale as 41.1.)
- 41.6. National party conference (same scale as 41.1.)
42. Indicate for each of these organs whether, in your view, it has too much or too little influence on the national policy and the internal functioning of Agalev/Ecolo.
 - 42.1–42.6. same list of organs as question 41, five-point scale from way too much influence (= 1) to way too little influence (= 5)
43. What do you think of the following claim: “Someone’s influence in Agalev/Ecolo can be attributed less to the function he officially exercises than to his presence and his interventions at important meetings.” (five-point scale from fully in agreement [= 1] to full disagreement [= 5])
44. If you think of the candidates on an electable place for the parliamentary elections in October, which importance do you attribute to the following qualities (answer even if you yourself are a candidate heading an electoral list)
 - 44.1. Age (five-point scale from very important [= 1] to very unimportant [= 5])
 - 44.2. Personal popularity (same scale as 44.1.)
 - 44.3. Being already Agalev/Ecolo member for a long time (same scale as 44.1.)
 - 44.4. Being a woman (same scale as 44.1.)
 - 44.5. Support by certain local groups (same scale as 44.1.)
 - 44.6. Ability to defend Agalev’s/Ecolo’s positions outside the party (same scale as 44.1.)
 - 44.7. Occupying a responsible position in one or the other of the social movements (environmental, pacifist, feminist) (same scale as 44.1.)
 - 44.8. Expertise in an important policy area (same scale as 44.1.)
45. Below you find the list for the qualities of candidates on electable positions for the parliament again. This time, we ask you to *choose* among them the *four qualities* that appear to you the most important. Place the number “1” behind the quality that appears to you

- most important, a “2” behind the second most important, a “3” behind the third, and finally a “4” behind the fourth most important.
- 45.1–45.8. (same list as question 44, place rank ordering behind four most important qualities)
45. What do you think of the following thesis: “Anybody can exercise a political mandate competently, provided he receives the opportunity of exercising such a mandate.” (five-point scale ranging from full approval [= 1] to full disapproval [= 5])
46. What would you think: Having well-known leaders in Agalev/Ecolo is generally useful or, on the contrary, harmful for the party? (five-point scale ranging from very useful [= 1] to very harmful [= 5])
47. It is not easy to realize grass-roots democracy in Agalev/Ecolo. Several explanations of why are given below. Please indicate each time whether you agree or not.
- 47.1. As any other party, Agalev/Ecolo often must make decisions very rapidly. Not enough time remains for consulting the members. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement [= 1] to full disagreement [= 5])
- 47.2. The people at Agalev’s/Ecolo’s helm do not make enough efforts to involve the members in decisions. (same scale as 47.1.)
- 47.3. National level political problems are often very complicated. The grass-roots members do not know much about them. A broad consultation thus becomes very difficult. (same scale as 47.1.)
- 47.4. The grass-roots members of Agalev/Ecolo are not sufficiently interested in the political problems on the national level. (same scale as 47.1.)
- 47.5. There are persons at the helm of Agalev/Ecolo who do not wish to risk that some of their ideas and opinions are disapproved by the Agalev/Ecolo grass roots. (same scale as 47.1.)
- 47.6. There are too few material resources (personnel, press coverage, money) for keeping everybody updated and for organizing decisions by the party’s grass roots. (same scale as 47.1.)
47. Below you find again the same propositions explaining difficulties of realizing grass-roots democracy in Agalev/Ecolo. This time, we ask you to choose from them the three explanations that appear to be

most important to you. Place the number “1” behind the explanation that appears to you most important, a “2” behind the second most important explanation, and a “3” behind the third. (same list of propositions as in question 47, respondents indicate ranking of importance)

48. In the West German Greens a vehement struggle is played out between the “fundamentalists” who reject government participation at the outset and the “realists” who want to try government participation. Where would you place yourself, closer to the fundamentalists or the realists?

- 1—clearly among the fundamentalists
- 2—among the fundamentalists
- 3—closer to the fundamentalists
- 4—between fundamentalists and realists
- 5—closer to the realists
- 6—among the realists
- 7—clearly among the realists

49. Assume that Agalev/Ecolo will receive even more votes in the future years, would you want to give Agalev/Ecolo a chance to participate in a government coalition or not?

- 1—I would like to give Agalev/Ecolo the chance to participate.
- 2—I would like to give Agalev/Ecolo the chance to participate, but with reservations.
- 3—Usually, I would not wish to give Agalev/Ecolo the chance to participate.
- 4—Certainly, I would not wish to give Agalev/Ecolo the chance to participate.

50. Please indicate your personal position on the following issues:

- 50.1. It is necessary that women are free to decide whether they want abortions or not. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.2. A drastic reduction of work time is necessary, even if this is accompanied by salary reductions. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.3. Belgium should leave NATO. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.4. The Greens are neither on the left nor on the right. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)

- 50.5. The large electricity companies must be nationalized. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.6. An eventual increase of the gasoline tax should not prevent low-income people from driving. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.7. The communitarian problems have no importance when we consider which other problems (unemployment, environment, peace . . .) must still be solved in Belgium. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.8. Europe should take a neutral position in the struggle between the superpowers. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.9. In order to protect nature and transform the economy in an ecological sense, state intervention in many areas is necessary. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.10. The extension of space for individual freedom is more important to me than a strengthening of bonds of neighborliness. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.11. Ecological standards with which industry must comply should not go so far as to drive a good part of industry out of Belgium. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.12. In the enterprises, the employees, local residents, and consumers, and not the owners, should have the power to decide. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 50.13. The multiplication of department stores must be pushed back to the benefit of the small merchants and producers. (five-point scale ranging from full agreement = 1 to full disagreement = 5)
- 51. On the political plane one often talks about “right” and “left.” How would you place yourself on the following scale? (seven-point scale, from far left, left, and center left, via center to center right, right, and far right)

52. Here are four important goals a government can set itself as priorities for the coming years. Rank them in decreasing order according to the importance you attribute to them (1 = the most important; 4 = the least important). (Use each number only once.)

52.1. Maintain order in the country

52.2. Give people more say in the decisions of government

52.3. Fight rising prices

52.4. Protect freedom of speech

Notes

Introduction

1. The notion of political “amateurism” has acquired different operational meanings in empirical studies. See Roback (1975). Although, as a late fallout of totalitarianism theories, it has been argued that amateurism can be found both on the extreme right and the extreme left of the political spectrum (Kirkpatrick 1976), evidence shows that at least the *procedural* dimension of amateurism (participatory decisionmaking) is much more supported by left than right political activists.

2. Although we do not deny that contingent historical circumstances under which parties are founded and the constraints of party competition are powerful forces shaping political parties, it would be wrong to dismiss the role of social mobilization and political ideas in the study of parties as sociological and teleological prejudices, as Panbianco (1988a: 3–4), following much of the

mainstream literature on party systems, suggests. In reality a more adequate party theory would have to integrate the impact of different forces on party structure and strategy in a more complex theoretical argument. Compare chap. 1 below and Kitschelt 1989a.

3. A similar suggestion follows from Ware's (1987) instructive review and synthesis of the party literature. Despite our reservations (see footnote 1), also Panebianco's (1988a) book represents an important innovative contribution to the study of party politics.

4. The West German Greens, for example, have rejected several efforts to survey their membership. Ecology party activists often argue that empirical social science research is a tool of technocratic elite control over opponents to the existing political institutions. With the exception of some communist parties, conventional parties in Western democracies are usually willing to circulate questionnaires among members or party activists. Yet such surveys are mostly confined to personal data and opinions of party members and do not probe very deeply into the parties' organizational power structure.

1 A Theory of Party Activism

1. In this chapter we summarize essential elements of the theoretical approach discussed in greater detail in Kitschelt (1989a: chap. 2).

2. This argument, of course, builds on the sociology and economics of organization founded by Clark and Wilson (1961) and Olson (1965).

3. For the Marxist conceptualization of intraparty decisionmaking as a struggle between leaders and followers see Rosa Luxemburg (1971) and Przeworski and Sprague (1986: 119). For the non-Marxist analysis of the leader/follower dichotomy see especially McKenzie (1955; 1982), Wellhofer and Hennessey (1974), and Robertson (1976).

4. Building on Sartori (1976: 131–40), but substantially modifying his argument, one can say that bilateral competition gives parties options to pursue more centripetal *or* more centrifugal strategies. Individuals may have an incentive to join a party's rank and file either because they are more "moderate" or more "extremist" than the party leadership.

5. The only internal organizational variable Robertson's (1976: 101–5) theory employs in order to explain changes in party strategy is maturation. Parties become more dominated by the leadership and more willing to submit themselves to electoralist strategies, the more they age and the closer the competition for seats and offices is with other parties. Although this hypothesis is clearly important, it leaves untouched some major sources of party change we will discuss below.

6. Budge and Farlie's (1983) salience theory of electoral competition makes an important first step in reversing the linkage between party strategy and electoral competition by arguing that parties have a choice in emphasizing or de-emphasizing issues. Viewed from the perspective of short-term electoral pay-

offs, party strategists must take electoral issues and preferences a party can appeal to as given. In the long run, however, parties may be able to “gain” issues by pursuing strategies that appear to be electorally unwise when evaluated from a short-run perspective. In fact, by always opting for electorally optimal short-run strategies, a party may “lose” emerging new issue dimensions.

7. We are criticizing rational choice theories of party organization here with the same argument Offe and Wiesenthal (1980) have advanced against Olson’s (1965) theory of collective action. The primary problem of many voluntary associations is not to satisfy the individual’s given preference schedules, but to choose and clarify what individuals want. Purposes are not exogenous, but constitute themselves in the political process itself.

8. The most influential and empirically most elaborate contribution to the behavioral party literature is still Eldersveld (1964). Chapter 15 of that book is particularly germane for the study of subcoalitions and power relations in modern parties. In European party politics, especially comparative studies of political factionalism such as Raschke (1977), Beller and Belloni (1978) and Hine (1982) have furthered our understanding of intraparty groups.

9. Other elements of the theory are outlined in Kitschelt (1989a). Needless to say, a more complete theory of party behavior which links voter preferences, the internal dynamic of party groups, party organization and strategy, party competition, and the party’s policy performance to each other goes beyond our present theoretical and empirical capabilities.

10. In fact, the extent and intensity of group organization can, as theories of corporatism show, directly reduce the incidence of civil strife and open hostilities and thus institutionalize or “domesticate” social cleavages.

11. Przeworski and Sprague (1986), for example, are strongly inclined toward a political voluntarism when they claim that cleavages are not objectively given, but themselves a result of party politics. It would be more adequate to look at the interplay between sociological and political factors in the shaping of societal cleavages.

12. This point is demonstrated in considerable detail in Kitschelt (1989a).

13. The most important studies are Hauss’s (1978) survey of the French Parti Socialiste Unifié and Logue’s (1982) analysis of the Danish Socialist People’s party. Both studies, however, emphasize the individual activist’s background and ideology and provide little information on organizational processes.

14. For instance, we left out batteries of questions relating to the activists’ personal incentives to become party militants or general attitude measurements of protest potential (Barnes and Kaase 1979) or political amateurism (cf. Soule and Clarke 1970).

15. The otherwise highly instructive study directed by Barnes and Kaase (1979), for instance, pays little attention to the very interesting differences of political participation and attitudes between their Austrian, British, Dutch, German, and American samples. Where aggregate differences are discussed at

all, the authors limit themselves to ad hoc interpretations. In this one respect the study represents a definitive step back behind Almond and Verba (1963).

16. As Lincoln and Zeitz (1980) have argued, different means on individual-level variables can be due to a structural rather than an individual effect. Given that we have only two aggregates we can compare, we cannot follow the sophisticated statistical technology Lincoln and Zeitz propose to separate individual and structural effects. Lincoln and Zeitz also point out that there are aggregate variables, such as size, division of labor, etc., which have no individual-level correspondent and vice versa. In this sense we interpret “cleavage mobilization” as an aggregate variable without an individual level correspondent.

17. Kaase and Marsh (1979b: 189–98) point out in a methodological note that the margins of bivariate and multivariate distributions need to be standardized if both independent and dependent individual-level variable distributions vary across aggregate contexts such as countries or, in our study, regions, because otherwise the analysis will be biased. Their own calculations, however, demonstrate that standardization in most instances will do little to change the relations among individual-level variables. We have therefore avoided the cumbersome and not all that common technique of standardization in our analysis.

2 Belgian Ecology Parties: Setting and Background

1. This process has been described in detail by Billiet (1984), Billiet and Huyse (1984), and Huyse (1984).

2. In the literature on corporatism only Lehmbruch (1977; 1984) has emphasized the importance of strong parties for the viability of peak-level negotiations between business and labor.

3. In 1982, 10.2 percent of the Flemish and 10.5 percent of the Walloon Belgians were postmaterialists (Eurobarometer 17). In 1986 the corresponding values were 10.5 percent and 11 percent (Eurobarometer 25).

4. For a discussion of the latter, compare Kitschelt 1988a: 206–8.

5. Cross-national evidence confirms this problem. Eurobarometer surveys found very high willingness to join left-libertarian movements in countries with little movement activity, such as Greece and Spain, whereas in countries with significant protest events only small shares of the population express a readiness to join the movements. The data are reported in Inglehart 1987b: table 1.

6. Probably the best methodology is the content analysis of newspaper and police records of protest events as explored by Gamson (1975) and Tilly (1978).

7. These data are analyzed in greater detail in Kitschelt 1989a: chap. 8.

8. A more detailed history of Agalev can be found in Buyle (1985), Peeters and Vermeiren (1980: 110–20), and Stouthuysen (1983).

9. Until 1986 members of the party executive had to be chosen from the members of the steering committee.

10. A good survey of the positions supported by party conferences can be

found in Werkgroep Economie Agalev (1985) and the resolutions the party conferences passed on the basis of this document.

11. For a history of Ecolo, compare Mahaux and Moden (1984).

12. The only exception is the arrondissement of Turnout where Agalev received 8.7 percent.

13. Agalev's electorate is analyzed in Deschouwer and Stouthuysen (1984), Swyngedouw (1986), and Swyngedouw and Billiet (1988). Surveys on Ecolo voters can be found in *Le Soir*, March 14, 1984, and Defeyt (1985).

14. See Müller-Rommel (1989), based on the Eurobarometer surveys 17 and 21.

3 Ideologues, Lobbyists, and Pragmatists in Ecological Politics

1. When we developed the questionnaire, our theoretical framework was still evolving. As a consequence, survey items only approximate our theoretical concepts. As we explain below, especially lobbyists could be identified only in rather indirect ways. In the study comparing German and Belgian ecology parties based on semistructured elite interviews, a somewhat different operationalization of intraparty groups was chosen (Kitschelt 1989a: chap. 4). Nevertheless, the findings are consistent with the present study.

2. In chapter 7 we will examine the actual power reputation of different party organs and relate them to the militants' preferred power distribution.

3. The theoretically most important and methodologically most sophisticated research from which these generalizations can be derived are Converse (1964), Inglehart and Klingemann (1976), and Klingemann (1979a–1979c). Critics have argued that L-R self-placements and placements of others depend very much on the respondent's relative frame of reference (Greven 1987: 97–99). Nevertheless, individual frames of reference still share enough commonality to identify convergence among the party and policy preferences of people who choose similar positions on the L-R scale.

4. A similar finding was recently derived from a sample of French ecology party leaders (Sainteny 1987). Forty-two of seventy-six respondents refused the L-R self-placements, but it turned out that fifty militants had voted for Mitterrand in the 1981 elections, while only a single one had supported Giscard. Moreover, the left-socialist Parti Socialiste Unifié is the most popular party, followed by the socialists and the bourgeois parties. Sainteny quite rightly labels the ecologists a "second left" because they are also highly unsympathetic toward the communists.

5. Such a measure could be based on Klingemann's (1979a) analysis of levels of cognitive awareness of left/right differences or on questions that explore whether activists' political involvement is issue specific or more generalized. Lacking such measures in our questionnaire, we had to identify *attitudi-*

nal complexes by direct reference to revealed *behavior* (social movement involvement).

6. For the comparison between Belgium and West Germany, this argument has been substantiated by Kitschelt (1989a: esp. chap. 4).

7. As may be recalled, missing cases were coded as organizationally content activists and as “centrists.” These militants can contribute only to the lobbyists or the pragmatists.

4 Activists’ Policy Preferences and Party Strategy

1. Of course, this alternative interpretation of low constraint in belief systems also constitutes a value judgment, something that Lane (1973: 103) appears not to realize when he uses the following quasi-biological analogy to defend his normative preference: “The healthy [!] person has multiple values, and he finds them often in conflict; his health is revealed in his toleration of the conflict and the means he chooses to reconcile the conflict.”

2. For a broad qualitative analysis of the belief systems characteristic of ecologists, compare Kitschelt (1984).

3. Associations between voter support for left-libertarian parties and postmaterialism have been analyzed in Inglehart (1987a) and Müller-Rommel (1988). It should be noted that many postmaterialists do not vote for left-libertarian parties, but that most party supporters are postmaterialists.

4. To anticipate the main argument, the most radical left-libertarians remain anticapitalist, whereas Inglehart would predict a waning of economic divisions with the rise of postmaterialism. In addition, radical left-libertarianism is associated with “deep ecologist” beliefs that are difficult to reconstruct in Inglehart’s terms.

5. A fourth and a fifth factor have eigenvalues of only slightly better than 1 and are difficult to interpret. Given their limited explanatory power, we have neglected them.

6. In an analysis of British Labour party militants, Whiteley (1983: 35–37) explains 29.8 percent of the variance on twenty-five policy statements with a single factor (eigenvalue 7.45) yielding a general right-left dimension. In part, however, differences in the explained variance of policy positions in Whiteley’s and our survey may be due not to true differences in ideological constraint, but to the choice of questions asked.

7. For an excellent survey of the debate about modernity and postmodernity, compare Welsch (1988).

8. When separate factor analyses are run for Agalev and Ecolo, factor III is not replicated, while factors I and II still surface within each subset of our sample. Thus, factors I and II are not artifacts of the Agalev/Ecolo difference. Both parties still yield an economic governance and a cultural modernity vs. postmodern deep ecology factor. In Agalev the economic factor explains slightly

more variance than in Ecolo (17.6 vs. 16.4 percent of the variance) because it also includes some libertarian demands (choice on abortion, European neutralism). In Ecolo, in contrast, the factor cultural modernity vs. postmodern deep ecology is more divisive (13.1 percent of explained variance as against 11.1 percent in Agalev) and also includes assessments of economic governance. Ecolo liberals are opposed to state intervention ($-.57$), utility nationalization (factor loading $-.51$), and industrial democracy ($-.50$).

9. Pearson's r 's for anticapitalism are $+.27$ (Agalev) and $+.22$ (Ecolo) and for postmodernism $+.35$ (Agalev) and $+.53$ (Ecolo). All associations are significant at the .05 level of confidence.

10. Since the salience of left and right belongs to the variables that were employed to construct the anticapitalism and postmodern deep ecology factors (see item 9 in table 6) the absence of a correlation between anticapitalism and left/right salience, as well as the positive correlation to postmodernism is a matter of definition. We have nevertheless included this regression for illustrative purposes in order to show the entire configuration of meaning including policy views, left/right salience, and L-R self-placement.

11. This configuration of attitudes remains essentially the same, regardless of whether we use original self-placements, with missing cases deleted, or "adjusted" self-placements, where the refusal to place oneself on the L-R axis is counted as a centrist position.

12. For the following arguments, compare especially Kitschelt (1984: 134–41) and Touraine et al. (1980).

13. A good representative of this position is Lovins (1977) in the American energy debate. In the German Greens these pure reformists are also called "realists."

14. This position is expressed by authors such as Harman (1976), Ophuls (1977), Porritt (1984), Sale (1980), Spretnak and Capra (1984), and Spretnak (1986). In the German Greens this ideological position has received the label "eco-libertarians."

15. This position is represented by eco-socialists such as Commoner (1976; 1979), Ebermann and Trampert (1984), or Ridgeway (1973).

16. In the literature on ecological politics socialist-anarchist and communitarian authors such as Bahro (1986) and Bookchin (1971; 1982) represent this position.

17. For this reason it is wrong to assume that activists are more "rational" if they pursue electoral success through moderate policy stances rather than radical change leading to electoral defeat. Radicals, too, may be rational calculators. The difference to moderates is simply a matter of evaluating outcomes of action. They may consider the policy benefits of strategies that improve a party's electoral support and help it to win government office too marginal to justify sacrificing their more ambitious policy goals. What explains strategic choice is not primarily the capacity for rational calculation, but the preferences and cognitive frameworks to which different groups of activists subscribe.

18. We have not chosen conventional American survey questions to tap strategic radicalism or moderation because, in European multiparty systems, they are unlikely to generate much variance. As Middel and Schuur (1981: 260) show in their study of Dutch party convention participants, most party activists across the entire spectrum of political ideologies say that parties should stand by their principles, even if this leads to a loss of voters, and that parties need a firm ideological basis.

19. This becomes even clearer if we run separate principal components analyses for Agalev and Ecolo. They reproduce the components structure represented in table 4-11 but tie postmodern deep ecology and leftist self-placements more strongly to the radicalism/moderation superdimension.

5 The Social Background of Left-Libertarian Activists

1. The literature on this topic abounds. Early studies include Flacks (1967) and Kenniston (1968). A multivariate analysis is provided by Braungart (1971). Summaries and further elaborations of the argument are provided by Lipset (1971: 80–124) and Wood (1974). While cross-national differences are important, Allerbeck, Jennings, and Rosenmayr (1979) found links between the parents' and their offspring's political beliefs in a 1974 survey, although the latter tended to be generally more liberal or radical.

2. Due to the notorious difficulties in operationalizing the notion of party identification in European party systems, we find consistency in electoral support for a party, a measure of "revealed preference," a more convincing indicator of identification than responses to the question of how close one feels to a party at the present time.

3. Here we rely on the rank ordering of sympathies for other political parties reported in table 3-7.

4. In Agalev more parents voted for the Christian democrats than in Ecolo, but among the militants the propensity to have voted for the center-right is about the same. In Agalev more activists supported the Flemish socialists (39 percent compared to 29 percent in Ecolo), while Ecolo supporters were somewhat more likely to support parties of the radical left (37 percent, as compared to 27 percent in Agalev).

5. An important group among independent Christians are, for instance, the "Christians for socialism" (Hellemans 1985b).

6. Our estimate of university and college attendance among younger cohorts is based on statistics on the size of Belgian age cohorts and university and college enrollment (cf. Institut National de Statistique 1985: 30 and 150–59). If anything, our estimates tend to overestimate college and university attendance and are thus robust enough to support our conclusions.

7. See, for instance, studies on the British communists (Bochel and Denver

1973), the French communists (Platone and Subileau 1976), and the Italian communists (Ercole, Lange, and Tarrow 1984; Sebastiani 1983). The Italian studies, however, note a decline of subcultural recruitment among the youngest cohorts of party functionaries. A similar loosening of subcultural ties has been observed by Greven (1987: esp. 128–31) in the West German Social Democratic party.

8. See, for instance, Kornberg, Smith, and Clark (1979: chap. 2) for U.S. and Canadian party activists, and Jennings (1984) more generally for the generational transmission of ideology in eight countries.

9. For an analysis of Flemish voter movements in 1985 and 1987, see Swyngedouw (1986) and Swyngedouw and Billiet (1988). Equivalent studies are not available for Wallonia and Ecolo.

10. The best comparative studies of participation supporting the resource endowment theory are Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978) and Barnes and Kaase (1979). For a survey of determinants of participation, see Milbrath and Goel (1977).

11. See Niedermayer and Schmitt (1983: 300) who report educational accomplishments of conference delegates in the French Unified Socialist party and the Danish Socialist People's party that are higher than those of corresponding groups in French and Danish conventional parties. Activists and members in most parties have, on average, higher educational achievements than the population. Surveys of party members confirm this picture, yet show somewhat lower levels of education than among conference delegates. See Barnes (1967), Becker and Hombach (1983), Kornberg, Smith, and Clark (1979), and Whiteley (1983) on parties in Italy, West Germany, Canada, the United States, and Britain. Comparisons inside and across parties show that (1) a party's ideology and clientele, (2) its age distribution, (3) the average political involvement of activists surveyed, and (4) the time at which the survey was taken (before/after the "educational revolution" of the 1960s) explain variance in the militants' average level of education.

12. Our calculation of annual gross incomes from monthly net disposable incomes is based on estimates taking the relatively steep progressive income tax and social security contributions into account. We cannot correct, however, for variations due to the size of the family and the number of income earners in the family.

13. These and subsequent estimates are derived from the Belgian national statistics (Institut National de Statistique 1985: 481). They are rough approximations because the declared and the actual income of individuals may be at variance, particularly in the higher income brackets. Moreover, the statements of taxable incomes reported in the Belgian national statistics may already subtract a number of income adjustments. These factors depress the declared income and make it more likely that we overestimate the income of Agalev and Ecolo militants relative to the national income distribution.

14. In the 1979 European Political Parties Middle Level Elites Survey activists in the eight major Belgian political parties (then not yet including the ecologists) were not asked to give precise figures about their income, but to express their subjective sense of satisfaction with their income, a measure that is likely to understate high earnings. Even so, 82 percent of the 1363 respondents described their financial situation as “very well off” or “well off.” Interestingly, these assessments vary little between socialist, Christian, liberal, and ethno-linguistic parties. See also Niedermayer and Schmitt (1983: 301) who found that militants in other left-libertarian parties, such as the French Unified Socialist party and the Danish Socialist People’s party, were clearly underrepresented in the upper income brackets, at least compared to all other parties surveyed in these countries.

15. The size of the Belgian adult age cohorts was calculated from Institut National de Statistique (1985: 30).

16. According to the 1979 European Political Parties Middle Level Elites Survey, 71.3 percent of 1363 interviewed Belgian militants in eight major parties were forty years or older. This ratio is the same in all major parties.

17. Niedermayer and Schmitt (1983: 299) found between 10 and 20 percent women delegates in Denmark, West Germany, and France. The Danish Socialist People’s party scored highest with 23 percent. Also the French Unified Socialist party did comparatively well (17 percent) although it lagged slightly behind the liberal-conservative UDF (20 percent) and the French socialists (19 percent).

18. With about 30 to 35 percent female members, the Belgian ecologists have a higher proportion of female *members* than most parties in Catholic countries (Lovenduski 1986: 135–56). Among party *activists* there is also a clear-cut difference. According to the 1979 European Political Parties Middle Level Elites Survey, only 17 percent of 1363 conference delegates in eight major Belgian parties were women, compared to Agalev’s and Ecolo’s 25 percent.

19. For socialist parties this trend has been documented by Pelinka (1983: chap. 4). Studies ranging from Ireland (Garwin 1976) to West Germany (Falke 1982: 65–70) and the United States (Abramowitz, McGlennon, and Rappoport 1986) found that party members and activists tend to belong to the educated upper middle class, no matter whether a party is on the right or the left.

20. As examples using a variety of conceptual tools and empirical arguments, compare Inglehart (1977), Barnes and Kaase (1979), and for a more institutionalist view Melucci (1985) and Offe (1985).

21. This notion was coined by Kirkpatrick (1976: chap. 8) in her study of delegates to the 1972 conventions of the U.S. Democratic and Republican parties. She found symbol specialists, such as teachers, particularly among the left-libertarian supporters of George McGovern (*ibid.*: 295). McGovern delegates were younger, more urban, more secular, more female than other delegates and included more students and delegates with Ph.D.’s, but fewer lawyers (*ibid.*: 70).

22. Among Agalev and Ecolo voters, however, the unemployed represent close to the national employment average (table 5-6, column 3). We must take into account, however, that the young age cohorts from which the parties recruit most of their voters were especially hard hit by unemployment.

23. Two other sociodemographic background variables—gender and income—show no correlation to intraparty groups. In any case these variables are not very important to set Agalev and Ecolo activists apart from the general population or activists in other parties, as we have argued above.

24. In Agalev anticapitalism is also weakly correlated with secularization: $r = .19$; $p < .05$; $N = 154$.

6 Careers into Ecological Politics

1. The problems of motivational analysis are discussed in Kornberg, Smith, and Clark (1979: 86–87) and Janda (1980: 126–32). We do not deny, however, that the comparison of answers to motivational questions among different parties sometimes yields interesting findings, such as in Kirkpatrick (1976) or Eldersveld (1983).

2. Prophets of the student movement such as Touraine (1969) or Marcuse (1972) were rightly criticized for elevating the student movement to the level of a new “revolutionary subject.” Yet they deserve credit for having sensed that the students’ revolts changed the political agenda of advanced capitalist democracies.

3. The lack of “organizational patriotism” among left-libertarians has been observed in a number of studies. See, for instance, Kirkpatrick (1976: 139), Hauss (1968: 176), and, specifically for ecology parties, Kitschelt (1989a: chap. 4).

4. Only the association between peace organizations and Third World groups is relatively strong ($r = +.36$; $p < .001$). A few other correlations explain a very modest two to six percent of the variance.

5. We will qualify this statement in chap. 7 when we analyze the nature of intraparty activism in detail.

6. We present only the final equations eliminating all those variables shown in figure 6-2 that are not significantly associated with intraparty group formation.

7. Compare Nie, Powell, and Prewitt (1969) and Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978: 112–42) who arrive at this conclusion. For an instructive comparison of socioeconomic determinants of participation and organizational mobilization, compare Rogers, Bultena, and Barb (1975).

8. In the literature on social movements the importance of channels of “micromobilization” has been emphasized by Wilson and Orum (1976), Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson (1980), and Klandermans (1986). Kricsi (1986) provides an instructive empirical application of the theory.

7 Participation and Power in the Party Organization

1. For instance, in 1984–85 Agalev's membership journal *Bladgroen* published several contributions reflecting on the validity of Michels's iron law of oligarchy in the party.

2. This conception represents a "weak" notion of oligarchy. According to a "strong" notion of oligarchy, it is not only the decisionmaking *process* that is controlled by a small leadership, but the actual *content* and *outcome* of that process contradicts the demands of the rank and file. We will return to this distinction between "weak" and "strong" notions of oligarchy in the third section of this chapter.

3. An exception is Janda's work on comparative political parties (see esp. Janda 1980; Harmel and Janda 1982). In Janda's data bank, however, power is primarily measured by features of the parties' formal organization or based on the secondary analysis of case studies which are difficult to compare.

4. Between the fall of 1985 when our questionnaire was circulated and the spring of 1988, the differential capacity of both parties to attract new members has been further reinforced. Agalev's membership has risen by 50 percent in the wake of electoral successes in 1985 and 1987. In contrast, Ecolo has lost a considerable number of party members and activists. By 1988 Agalev had at least twice as many members as Ecolo.

5. This finding is somewhat at odds with studies concluding that solidarity incentives are irrelevant for entry into a party but are important for sustained party work (cf. Conway and Feigert 1968).

6. Other older left-libertarian parties across Europe also have extraordinarily low member-voter ratios (cf. Kitschelt 1989b).

7. For Belgian parties definite figures cannot be obtained. But the discussion in Ceuleers (1981: 165) suggests that 1 percent of the Belgian voters are continuously involved in party politics.

8. A similar vocabulary to denote types of political involvement has been employed by Eldersveld (1964: 363) who distinguishes between cosmopolitans, elite associates, localists, and isolates in his study of the Detroit party organizations. The distinction between cosmopolitans and localists in organization sociology is of course Merton's (1968).

9. We are building here on Heidar's (1984: 7–10) discussion of power in political parties, which closely follows the alternative conceptions of power in the American community power debate of the 1950s.

10. In contrast to Heidar (1984: 10), we believe that the study of non-decisionmaking does not yield a notion of power and a research strategy different from decisional, reputational, and positional power conceptualizations. The power of nondecisionmaking, in fact, can be linked both to the actors' reputation and, as structuralists have argued, to their resources in a

political system. Based on this information, relevant nondecisions can be identified by comparative analysis (cf. Crenson 1971).

11. A good summary of the main arguments and an advocacy of the “structural” perspective on power can be found in Offe (1977). Of course, our taxonomy of approaches to political power is not quite complete. It leaves out, for instance, Lukes’s (1974) notion of power as the distortion of actors’ overt interests when compared to their counterfactual true interests or Parsons’s (1963) concept of power as a generalized medium.

12. The classical study is, of course, Eldersveld’s (1964) analysis of U.S. parties in Detroit. Studies of European parties conceiving of the exercise of power as the enforcement of decisions against resistance, however, sometimes find more centralized, oligarchical power structures. See, for example, McKenzie’s (1955) account of British parties, Raschke’s (1974) and Günther’s (1979) studies on the West German Social Democracy, or the fine work of Jenson and Ross (1984) on the French Communist party. Minkin’s (1978) comprehensive analysis of British Labour party conferences, finally, comes down somewhere between democracy and oligarchy.

13. In the next subsection we will summarize findings based on these interviews and reported in detail in Kitschelt 1989a.

14. Precise, empirically detailed studies of Belgian parties do not exist. A fairly good insight into the operation of these parties, however, can be gained from Obler (1974), Rowies (1975), and Ceuleurs (1977, 1981) as well as Dewachter’s (1987: 311–31) summary of the literature.

15. In fact the secretary was forced to resign in late 1988 when some members of the party executive and steering committee felt he had gone beyond his formal competences and usurped political power.

16. Examples of reputational studies are Lagroye and Lord (1975: 580–86) on French parties, Kornberg, Smith, and Clark (1979) on Canadian and U.S. party workers, and Greven (1987: 61–94). Heidar (1984: 9) mistakenly claims there are no reputational studies of power relations in parties.

17. Greven (1987: 80) finds a similar distribution of power among a small sample of West German Green activists. Whereas 61.6 percent attributed much power to the party executives, only 18.8 percent felt the same way about the party’s elected representatives.

18. As Kitschelt (1989a: chap. 4), however, shows in a comparative analysis, hostility between the rank and file and party executives is more widespread in the West German Greens than in Agalev, and it is least common in Ecolo. Where the left-libertarian cleavage is highly mobilized and where more ideologues populate the parties, resentment of party executives will be greater, a hypothesis we will test with the Belgian survey material.

19. In this respect it is again interesting to note that Agalev respondents feel more at ease in answering questions about the power reputation of party organs than their Ecolo colleagues. As table 7-10 shows, overall between 206 and 213

out of 256 militants assessed the power of party organs, yielding no-response rates between 16.8 and 19.5 percent. In Agalev, however, only an average of 13 percent refused to answer this question, whereas in Ecolo the no-response rate is 24 percent.

20. As Heidar (1984: 13) has pointed out, oligarchy and democracy are continuous, not discrete properties, and they can be more or less present in political parties. Thus, we would argue that the power distribution of conventional Belgian parties, and that of most European parties, is considerably more oligarchical than that of Agalev or even Ecolo. Unfortunately, comparisons of power structures among parties are based only on informed judgment because comparative party studies usually do not employ the same methodology of power analysis. As an exception which relies exclusively on the positional approach to power analysis, but still yields interesting insights, see Janda and King (1985).

21. The importance of charismatic authority in fluid, nonbureaucratic organizations has, of course, been first identified by Weber (1920/1978). In left-libertarian parties similar phenomena have been observed in the West German Greens (Kitschelt 1988b; 1989a) and in the Italian Radical party (Panebianco 1988b).

22. Lucid reconstructions of Michels's arguments, such as May (1965), Hands (1971), Beetham (1977), Eldersveld (1982: 158–61), and Wippler (1984) facilitate our task of distinguishing strands in Michels's analysis.

23. It is ironic that rational choice theories of party control, usually proposed by political conservatives, build on the same crude materialist psychological interpretation of party leadership and the same arguments that Michels and the extreme leftist or syndicalist critics have employed to argue that socialist parties necessarily become supporters of the societal status quo. What unites both is a mistrust of large cohesive organizations.

24. Due to the small number of cases in Ecolo, the linkage between views on oligarchy theory and the types of activists does not reach acceptable levels of significance, although the correlations point into the correct direction. Pooling the data for Agalev and Ecolo, the relationship between types of party activists and theory of elite control as well as membership lethargy are highly significant (χ^2 probabilities are $p = .007$ in the first and $p = .008$ in the second case).

25. About three quarters of the explained variance (adjusted $R^2 = .15$) can be attributed to ideology, as operationalized by ideologues and strategic radicalism, a variable we will discuss in detail in chapter 7. In contrast, only a quarter of the explained variance can be accounted for by party affiliation.

26. Overall, the equation explains 8 percent of the variance in rankings of membership lethargy.

8 Pathways to Political Leadership

1. This pluralist view of intraparty competition as a minimum definition of organizational democracy is elaborated in the seminal analysis by Lipset, Trow,

and Coleman (1956) of the American printers' union. Although parties and unions operate in different institutional settings, a number of the conditions they found to facilitate representative democracy in the labor union also apply to ecology parties. Militants have relatively high competence (education and skill), there is competition between political viewpoints (ideologues, lobbyists, and pragmatists), the organization is relatively decentralized, and institutional rules guarantee competitive elections.

2. In the Belgian electoral system minor parties are uncertain in which electoral constituencies they will win seats. Especially in the smaller multi-member electoral constituencies with only two or three parliamentary seats, they would have to win upward of 20 percent of the vote to gain a mandate directly. In order to give them parliamentary representation roughly proportional to their share of the electorate, small parties are compensated for votes received without gaining direct mandates according to complex accounting rules which designate the constituency from which a party's candidate is chosen for parliament. It is inherently unpredictable in which constituency the candidate is most likely to win office.

3. In our questionnaire we asked respondents to indicate whether they held an elected office (cf. question 34, Appendix II). Given the small number of elected representatives above the local level, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of those who responded with yes are municipal councillors.

4. See, for instance, Valen's (1966) study on Norway. But Ranney (1965: 278) concludes in his study on the recruitment of British Labour and Tory parliamentarians that the sociological distance between the leaders and followers of the Labour party is greater than between Tory and Labour parliamentarians.

5. Compare Herzog (1975) on West Germany, King (1981) on Britain, Kirkpatrick (1976: chap. 3) on the United States, and Kornberg and Mishler (1976: chap. 8) on Canadian parliamentarians. In a comparative study of social democratic parties Pelinka (1983: chap. 4) arrives at a similar conclusion.

6. On the severe underrepresentation of women in the leadership of most European parties, see especially Lovenduski (1986: chap. 6).

7. On the nomination of parliamentary candidates, see Valen and Katz (1964) and Valen (1966) for Norway, Ranney (1965) for Britain, Zeuner (1970) for West Germany, and Wertman (1977) for Italy. Primary elections make the American recruitment process too different from the European practices to be included here.

8. It is true that, on average, party activists *and* party leaders are more radical than voters, although the discrepancy is not always very great (cf. Dalton 1985; 1988). Yet the internal variance *among* party militants and even *among* leaders is in many instances more important than their collective outlook compared to that of the masses.

9. Petrocik and Marvick (1983: 351–52) show that the difference between the political outlook of the 1964 and 1972 delegates to U.S. party conventions

reflects changes in the general electorate, not a radicalization of party activists made possible by the spread of the primary system.

10. This argument is developed in greater detail in Kitschelt (1989c).
11. For the United States, compare, as outstanding examples from a wealth of similar studies, McClosky et al. (1960), Constantini (1963), Eldersveld (1964: chap. 8), Jackson, Brown, and Bositis (1982), and Brudney and McDonald (1986). In Europe “middle-level elites” are usually defined as activists attending national party conferences (cf. Reif, Cayrol and Niedermayer 1980). Moderation at the local level and the party leadership in parliamentary office, but greater radicalism among conference delegates, was found for the British Labour party by Whiteley (1983: 44) and Searing (1986) and for Austrian parties by Stiefbold (1974). In the Italian Socialists, Barnes (1967: 228) noted that middle-level party activists were more in favor of party democracy than inactive members.
12. Of course, there are other social and institutional conditions which influence political opportunity structures to run for leadership. Compare Schlesinger (1965) on the United States, Kornberg and Winsborough (1968) on Canada, Prewitt and Eulau (1971) on councilmen in the San Francisco Bay Area, and Dogan’s (1979) study of changing recruitment styles to the French National Assembly.
13. A multiple regressions of political careers and patterns of involvement on party office yields a higher proportion of explained variance in Agalev than in Ecolo (27 percent explained variance in Agalev, 20 percent in Ecolo).
14. We can demonstrate the lobbyists’ privileged position in *both* parties in a multiple regression analysis in which we use offices as predictors of ideological positions:

	Agalev Lobbyists		Ecolo Lobbyists	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Party executives	.00	.00	−.07	−.08
Municipal electoral office	+.22	+.19*	+.27	+.30**
Candidacy in the 1985 national elections	+.18	+.16*	+.16	+.19(*)
Adjusted R ²		.04*		.09**
N		161		93

(*)p ≤ .1 *p ≤ .05 **p ≤ .01 ***p ≤ .001

15. This, for instance, has happened in the West German Greens, where “movementist” criteria of political recruitment have been gradually displaced by the candidates’ affiliation with intraparty currents. See Kitschelt (1989a: chap. 7).
16. This finding, of course, is no news to those elite theorists of democracy who always asserted that direct democracy will lead to the rule of a small group

of especially committed, resourceful, and unrepresentative notables. See, for instance, Weber (1920/1978: 949–50).

9 Conclusion: Beyond the Conventional European Left

1. This finding is especially significant because the theoretical framework guiding our analysis was developed in a publication completed before we undertook the present analysis (Kitschelt 1989a). In a similar vein the entire investigation reported in the present study was completed before we ran this final principal component analysis to validate our theoretical constructs.

2. A comparative study of the Belgian and West German ecology parties is able to show the influence of both cleavage mobilization and the parties' competitiveness on intraparty group behavior. Compare Kitschelt (1989a).

3. See, for example, Tannahill's (1978) study of West European communist parties which accounts for variations in the strength, structure, and orientation of communist parties in terms of working class mobilization, regime tolerance, the parties' competitive position, and their recruitment of activists.

4. For an elaboration of these arguments see Kitschelt (1989a and 1989b).

5. The most useful materials can be found in Baumgarten (1982), Hauss (1978), and Logue (1982).

6. But see the recent contribution by Poguntke (1987).

7. See for Scandinavia Kuhnle, Strom, and Svasand (1986) and for West Germany Schönbohm (1985).

8. This issue is discussed by Wilson (1979).

9. The first detailed empirical study of left-libertarianism in conventional parties is Schmitt's (1987) analysis of the political views of West German party delegates. His study, however, casts little light on the organizational dynamic of conventional parties under the impact of left-libertarian demands.

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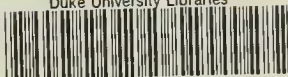
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